■ Sports
Bata advances; Django falls

■ Metro/A22
New MMDA ticketing system confuses motorists

■ Business/B1
OFW remittances down 7.35% in May

■ World/A10
New Iraq car bomb attack kills 10; governor killed

■ News/A2
Palace announces new AFP appointments

■ Lifestyle
Monaco's Princess Caroline coming to Manila to visit

DOJ wages war on campus gambling in private schools

By Philip C. Tubeza

MEGA-STAKES gambling on campus, particularly basketball score betting, is the target of a large-scale war being waged by the Department of Justice and administrators of exclusive schools in Metro Manila.

The first step in the crusade is to ban the use

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

e-mail: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Friday, July 17, 2004 ● 34 pages / vol. 19 | no. 249
website: www.inq7.net

Angelo: I am coming home

Kin, town mates tie yellow ribbons

"WAIT for me, I'm coming back to you," Angelo de la Cruz addressed his family Thursday as his hometown in Mexico, Pampanga, prepared for his homecoming.

The besieged truck driver assured his family, and the entire nation, that he was all right and would be coming home soon from captivity and a threat of beheading by militants in Iraq.

But the kidnappers made it clear they would only free De la Cruz after the departure of the last member of the 51-man Philippine contingent from Iraq by the end of this month, a new deadline.

The Iraqi militants who captured De la Cruz last week had demanded to kill him unless Manila withdrew by 48 soldiers and eight police officers by July 20, a month ahead of schedule.

In the video shown on Al Jazeera television Thursday, De la Cruz thanked the Philippine government for agreeing to withdraw its forces.

De la Cruz was shown no longer wear-

ALREADY yellow ribbons are blooming in the hometown of Angelo de la Cruz in Barangay Mexico, Pampanga. Either it's wishful thinking or his sister Nelia Casanar, who's tying the homecoming symbol to the De la Cruz home, knows something you're not in confidence and is not disclosing via good news to the public.

WHAT, me worry? US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone goes jogging along Roxas Boulevard on Thursday even as his government has expressed "extreme disappointment" over the Arroyo administration's decision to pull out the RP contingent from Iraq.

AFTER DAYS of dispute, days of silence, a self-assured President Arroyo emerges from seclusion on Thursday to officiate at a mass oath-taking of the newly elected officials of Laguna.

Pullout pulls up support for GMA

ALTHOUGH reduced here and hardly visible the past few days, President Macapagal-Arroyo drew messages of support for the government's announced decision to pull out the troops in Iraq to save Angelo de la Cruz.

"I fear decisions[shrouds that she is sensitive to the legitimate needs and wants of her people, especially because it involves a human life," Bacolod Bishop Vicente Navarra said yesterday in Cebu City.

Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal expressed a similar sentiment and disclosed that in behalf of all the bishops in the country, he requested the President on Monday to pull out the 51 members contingent.

"The concern of the Church is the life of Angelo and the other Filipinos in Iraq. And the majority of them are workers, not American forces," Vidal said.

In Manila, more senators spoke up to defend Ms Arroyo, who had come under criticism from everyone for the troop withdrawal.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said the United States should understand that Ms Arroyo had the "national interest" in mind when she made the decision.

Gov't playing dangerous game, say diplomats

THE PHILIPPINE government is playing a dangerous game in its attempt to free a Filipino hostage in Iraq by succumbing to pangs deliberately exerted by militants, diplomats in Manila said.

They say government announcements since the crisis began last week have been vague and misleading, and may have done more harm than good in trying to secure the release of Angelo de la Cruz, a truck driver and father of eight children.

The Iraqi kidnappers have threatened to behead De la Cruz unless the Philippines withdraws its contingent of 51 soldiers and policemen in Iraq by July 20, one month ahead of schedule.

It is unclear whether De la Cruz has been released, and it is equally unclear whether the Philippines has begun withdrawing its tiny contingent as it simply not replacing those on leave.

On Wednesday, Foreign Secretary Delia

PRICE TO PAY

RP faces loss of big Iraq contracts

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.
and Rissin Papa

NOT ONLY a chunk cut in US aid but also the loss of big contracts in the multi-billion-dollar reconstruction of Iraq is bound to result from the Philippine government's decision to withdraw the troops from that violence-wracked country.

This grim scenario was raised yesterday by Secretary Jeremias Montemayor before Wallace, a longtime resident of the Philippines who advises multinational companies on country risks.

Wallace told the Inquirer that the pull-

out of troops in exchange for the release of Filipino hostage Angelo de la Cruz would still be fresh in the memory when US officials start the bidding for contracts in Iraq. "I think you will see much less support from the United States. It won't be stated, but the Philippines will be downgraded in the US interest."

On Wednesday, Wallace warned that the United States' expressed disappointment over the decision of President Macapagal-Arroyo to pull out could be reflected in the reduction of aid to the Philippines.

But US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone sounded an encouraging note when he cited the alliance between the Philippines and the United States.

Ricciardone yesterday said in an "in-depth" interview with reporters at Camp Aguinaldo that the United States was standing behind the Philippines as its "partner."

"This is the time of a severe test to your country," the ambassador said, adding:

"We are allies. We are here for you. In a time of crisis, it's up to us as your allies to help you to be strong, to encourage

Vitug exits high court laughing

By Philip C. Tubeza

IS THERE a better time for the last laugh than when one has a foot out the door?

Poet-the-issue existing Supreme Court Justice Jose Vitug joked to one more time during his farewell ceremonies.

And leave than his usual reserve, rose to lighten up a serious court discussion. Vitug led no less than his fellow colleagues in the jobs

Saudi slammed for treating OFWs like slaves

LONDON—Foreign laborers, including those from the Philippines, suffer extreme exploitation and harsh working conditions that resemble slavery in Saudi Arabia, an international human rights watchdog said Thursday.

Saudi Arabia, however, said the report exaggerated the experiences of a few of the estimated 9 million foreigners working in the kingdom and noted that millions of families around the world were dependent on remittances from such workers.

Among those the bulk of foreign workers in Saudi Arabia who, according to Labor Minister Ghazi al-Gosaibi, number 8.8 million. This compares to an indigenous population of about 17 million.

In its first comprehensive report on foreign laborers in the oil-rich kingdom, the New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) slammed authorities, the legal system and private employers in Saudi Arabia for a range of abuses that sometimes led to death.

"We found new and common inhuman treatment resembling slavery," said Sarah Leah Whitson, executive director of HRW's Middle East and North Africa Division, summing up a 135-page report released by the rights watchdog in London.

The hard-hitting report called on Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah to set up an independent commission to investigate the abuses and publicize its findings.

Discrimination against women in the conservative kingdom compounds the plight of female workers, some of whom have been victims of sexual abuse and forced confinement, according to the report.

Information obtained from those women after brief security workers in Saudi Arabia pointed to "widespread, generalized, unusual the abuse and treatment of women in unsafe conditions," the rights watchdog alleged.

"In one case, some 300 women from India, Sri Lanka and the Philippines worked 12 hour shifts, six days a week, cleaning hospitals in Jeddah.

"At the end of each work day, they were returned to crowded, dormitory-style housing, with 16 women sharing

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

Palace fires trade exec

AFP revamp: De los Reyes is vice chief

By Alcuin Papa

ERAP KIN AT PALACE
President Arroyo congratulates Emilio Ejercito, nephew of ousted President Joseph Estrada, after the now-self-taking of newly elected officials of Laguna at the Malacañang Heroes' Hall. Ejercito was elected mayor of Pagsanjan.

By Armando N. Nocum

MALACAÑANG has dismissed from service the head of a state corporation for allegedly concluding a questionable $5 million (about P280 million) settlement with a Marcos crony firm that had allegedly run off with $25 million in government-guaranteed loans in 1981.

In a resolution, Malacañang upheld the decision of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission declaring Joel Valdez, the former head of the Trade and Investment Development Corp. (Tidcorp), liable for grave graft for shortening the release of the funds even before the Sandiganbayan could rule on the issue.

In a June 29 order, the Office of the President took Valdez to task for allegedly maintaining the solution to the Land Bank of the Philippines as payment to a firm owned by Victoria V. Chuidian, said to be a crony of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

In a memorandum signed for an absolute from the President, Ma. Elena Bautista, deputy executive secretary for legal affairs, noted that the Sandiganbayan had yet to rule on the ill-gotten wealth case against Chuidian involving the $25-million bailout loans.

The $5 million that Valdez allegedly released was for a reported settlement with Chuidian's Asian Reliability Corp. (ARC), which acquired $25 million in loans from the Credit Swiss First Boston and the Security and Trust Co.

The loans were guaranteed by Tidcorp, which was then known as the Philippine Export and Foreign Loan Guarantee Corp. (Philguarantee).

In 1981, Philguarantee discovered that Chuidian had "drawn off" the loan "to other purposes" with Philguarantee's approval and that the loan had not been made used with the Central Bank.

Credit Swiss First Boston and SBTC declared the loan in default and asked Philguarantee for payments. The latter then summoned the companies and made some payments on the loans.

In 1985, Philguarantee sued Chuidian and his companies before the Superior Court of Santa Clara, California for the nonpayment of what it said for the loans, prompting Chuidian to negotiate for a settlement with the Marcos government.

After Marcos' ouster in 1986, the Aquino government from the deal and the Presidential Commission on Good Government issued a sequestration order against the Chuidian loan.

A year later, the PCGG filed a P57-billion suit with the Sandiganbayan against Chuidian, Marcos, Imelda, her late brother Benjamin and 20 others. The case remains pending in court.

The PCGG and Imelda, the then minister of human settlements and Interior Secretary Rafael Alunan, had a financial interest in ARC, an investment and semi-conductor export firm owned by Chuidian, when the loans were applied for and approved. It alleged that Imelda had "secured and heavily recommended" the approval of the $25-million loan application by the Philippine Central Bank governor Jaime Laya.

In 1987, the new officials of Philguarantee also decided to enter the agreement that their predecessors had concluded with Chuidian, but lost in California's court of appeals and supreme court.

In a final judgment, the California high court declared that Philguarantee was liable to pay Chuidian $4.6 million, but the amount was to be charged "from debts owed to Philguarantee in the United States."

In subsequent negotiations, Philguarantee managed to lower the settlement cost to $6,00,000.

When he became Tidcorp head in 2001, Valdez resumed negotiations with Chuidian, and the settlement amount progressively increased to $12.5-million, $4.4 million and finally $5 million.

He also opposed or dumps the settlement by against the National Treasury, contrary to the California court ruling that the money to obtained from Philguarantee assets in the US.

The PCGG noted that Valdez' "persistent effort to unlawfully settle the obligation would be regarded as highly questionable."

"The Commission is convinced that respondents did not protect the interest of the Philippine Government by not insisting to pay the previously agreed settlement amount," the PAGC said.

The Inquirer called Valdez at Tidcorp but his secretary Ma Mitchiel said he had resigned in January (the also said Valdez was now with the SGV accounting firm. When this reporter called SGV, he was told that Valdez is in Paris.

SC suspends judge for sex harassment

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE SUPREME Court has suspended a disabled Cebu judge for sexually harassing a woman lawyer and one of his own staff members on separate occasions.

In a 14-page resolution, the SC Third Division slapped Cebu Regional Trial Court Judge Anacleto M. Camotado with a six-month suspension without pay for the sexual harassment of Public Attorney's Office lawyer Grace H. Wilmo and his clerk Ma. Jocelynn E. Quiñones.

The SC told Camotado violated the Code of Judicial Conduct and warned him he would be kicked out of the government service if he repeated the offense.

"S.Ji penalty for issuing and disseminating unwelcome offensive remarks indicates a certain moral depravity and lack of respect towards the female employees," said the decision penned by Associate Justice Renato C. Corona.

Court records showed that Camotado, who has the use of only one hand, harassed Wilmo in his chambers on March 9, 2001.

While they were discussing a case, Camotado suddenly placed his hand on her right thigh and squeezed it. Then took her hand and squeezed it, too.

Wilmo then stood up and headed for the door but the judge caught up with her and said, "Kiss ko lang!" (Let me kiss you).

Wilmo left the room but Camotado made it appear that nothing had happened and told one of his staff members to close Wilmo some court records.

"Although she was trembling, she pretended to look at the records then ran out of the staff room and cried," the SC said.

In Quiñones' case, the judge was found to have harassed her on three different occasions in February 2001, including "dismissal day."

On that day Camotado asked Quiñones to open a jar of sugar for him since he could not because of his disability. Once inside his chambers, the judge greeted her, "Happy Valentine's Day," and asked where she had been the night before.

When she said she had been at home, Camotado suddenly grabbed her right hand and kissed her on the cheek.

"He was so shocked she could not react. Then Jocelynn left the chambers and cried," the SC decision said.

In his defense, Camotado said he was "just being friendly" and his actions were "innocent gestures."

But the SC disagreed.

"Judge Camotado's behavior must be sanctioned. We are neither unmindful by his claims of innocent playfulness nor impressed by his excuses displays of outgoingness. We cannot lessen the bounds of decency, morality and propriety," the SC said.

'VICIOUS TERRORIST'

Richard Gere is 'action' hero in fight vs AIDS

By Connie Fernandez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BANGKOK—In the movies, actor Richard Gere usually sweeps women off their feet and into his arms. In real life, he is an "action" hero fighting against a "vicious terrorist."

Except that it is not Osama bin Laden, the head of the al-Qaida international terror network, that he's after but the equally deadly menace of AIDS, or acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

At a media forum here on Tuesday, Gere described AIDS as a "vicious terrorist" and the "biggest threat" to the happiness and livelihood of people around the world.

The actor has been involved in the campaign against the spread of HIV, the human immuno-deficiency virus that causes AIDS for the past 156 years.

His AIDS activism started in his own community of actors and entertainers in the United States at a time when there was a stigma attached to HIV infection, especially among the "entertainment gay community."

"It was tagged as 'gay cancer' and thought of as a retribution to the gay community," Gere said.

The actor said some of his friends who were infected with the virus had refused to come out fearing discrimination and died alone as a result.

Gere admitted his participation at the ongoing 15th International AIDS Conference in Bangkok "has been an emotional time for [him]" because of the sad memories that it brought back.

He said he cried back in his hotel room, remembering how his friends had suffered and died.

Gere said he has no plans to enlist his actor colleagues in his advocacy for HIV/AIDS prevention. They will support the campaign once they are ready, he said. Some are already doing so though they do not travel as much as he does, he said.

Much of the actor's activities have been focused on India where the number HIV cases is estimated to have grown to 5.1 million from 1986 to 2003.

He launched the Heroes Project, an initiative to mobilize society and media industry leaders in the fight against HIV/AIDS in India, in Mumbai early this month.

It is a three-year project, which will include a public education campaign in partnership with the Star India cable network, aimed at reducing stigma and discrimination attached to persons infected with the virus.

Star India includes Star Plus, Star Gold, Channel V, Star World, Star Movies, National Geographic, among others.

GERE

Gere said getting the media involved in HIV/AIDS prevention was very important because they had the power to get into the homes and hearts of every individual.

As in other Third World countries, the level of information about HIV/AIDS in India was "almost ground zero," even on the virus' mode of transmission or prevention, he said.

The virus can be transmitted through sex and the use of contaminated needles and blood. It can also be transmitted from an infected pregnant mother to a fetus.

Only a few doctors in India knew what medicines to give to people infected with HIV, the actor said.

Most of the HIV/AIDS information are disseminated by non-government organizations that have been working on the prevention campaign since 1986 when the first case was detected in the country, he said.

Star India has committed about 14 million minutes in airtime, to include 26,000 public service messages, to the Heroes Project. The first television public service announcement will use the services of Indian cricket player Rahul Dravid.

In remote areas of India where access to media is next to impossible, Gere said an information network has been built through members of the Rotary Club which has an outlet in every village.

"It is just a matter of using this network. The system is there but it is not just being used for HIV/AIDS," he said.

No majority support yet for Drilon-Villar term split

By TJ Burgonio

DRILON

VILLAR

HOME, it's a done deal. But does it have the approval of the entire administration coalition?

Days after Senators Franklin Drilon and Manuel Villar agreed to share the three-year term of the Senate President, some of their administration colleagues were still unsure if they would support it.

"That's their agreement, we are not part of it. That is only binding to them," Sen. Rodolfo Biazon (Liberal Party) said in a brief phone interview echoing an earlier statement by neighbor Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II.

Biazon admitted that he was squarely behind Drilon as Senate President, but slapped short of coming support for Drilon's postponement with Villar. While Villar is the leader of the Nacionalista Party.

"It depends; we'll see how things turn out," he said when asked if he would eventually back the agreement when the time comes.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan, LP vice president, agreed with his colleagues in the majority "to accept" the arrangement.

"As we are now in the process of consolidating the majority. We need members of the majority to agree to Drilon. We don't deny a senator his right to choose his leader," he said in a press briefing at his Senate office.

"There's no such thing as 'take it or leave it' arrangement... This will later to be adopted as a common decision of the majority," he added.

Drilon, for his part, voiced confidence that he and Villar would be able to attain the support of their administration allies for the agreement.

"I am confident that we will have the support of the majority. We will have a conference on this. We don't have to go through a voting. We will arrive at a consensus as we arrived at a consensus in the past on issues of this nature," he said.

When they announced their agreement last Monday, Drilon and Villar admitted that they will lead to discord that with their administration allies. So far, only Sen. Pilar Juliano "Pia" Cayetano had publicly voiced support for the deal. Her fellow the four Sens. Benigno Aquino, Juan Ponce Enrile, Renato Cayetano, had a similar hands-off-for agreement with Drilon as the previous Congress, but fell ill and died before he could serve his share of the term.

Senator Sonia, another LP stalwart, had earlier declared that he would not be bound by the term-sharing agreement because he was not a party to it.

Under the set-up, Drilon would preside over the Senate in the first two regular sessions, or the first two years of the 13th Congress, and Villar, in the third regular session, or third year, when Congress in July 2006.

Lakas, NPC renew coalition in House

By Carlos Pabio

DE VENECIA

THE MAJORITY Lakas-CMD party led by Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. has renewed its partnership with the Nacionalista People's Coalition of Businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. in the 13th Congress even as an alternative coalition of administration officials and parties is shaping up.

Coalition talks are going on between the Liberal Party and the Bakudalar ng Mulayang Pilipinas (BMP), the political party vehicle of President Diosdado Macapagal Arroyo, another sign of the behind-the-scenes struggle between the De Venecia-led Lakas and Kampi before midnight Aug. Reynaldo Parta, Malacañan for comment in the House.

Kampi spokesperson Rep. Abraham Mitra (Palawan) has confirmed that the LP, a major coalition partner of Lakas in the 12th Congress, is "forming a coalition" with Kampi to support the President's 10-point social and economic program.

"As an institution, the LP is identified with the President and we want a bigger role to support his administration," explained Mitra.

Kampi now boasts a membership of 71 House legislators aside the LP has 37), said Mitra.

De Venecia earlier offered a merger between Lakas and Kampi but the latter has yet to officially accept the proposal.

While the LP and Kampi are nursing each other, the NPC has "pursued a successful coalition agreement with Lakas, according to a joint statement released yesterday by NPC secretary general Rep. Joseph Ace Clarete (Cebu) and Rep. Jacqui Agnes (NPC, Turlac).

Biazon and Lapus asked their Congress colleagues to "set aside party politics and be like doctors to work and solve the budget not based on party lines but country."

"This is the time to unite. It makes no sense to create new divisions after the elections," Lapus said.

Lapus, the incoming chair of the House ways and means committee, said that 46 of the 58 sitting NPC congress later on he approved the renewed coalition with Lakas.

Lakas has 1,030 house members and its coalition with NPC creates a stable majority in the House.

It is not known whether former NPC spokesperson Rep. Francis Escudero (Sorsogon) is joining the Lakas-NPC majority bloc.

Escudero moved to the opposition ranks after declaring his political support for presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

Mitra said that LP has designated Rep. Benito Ramos (Bukidnon) as chief negotiator with Lakas-Kampi proposed by Rep. Victor Sumulong (Antipolo).

"We feel that Lakas is not moving us as an equals," Mitra said.

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

[illegible] Law [illegible] — Credibility of child victim or witness; in rape cases — The trial court's findings on the credibility of witnesses carry great weight and respect and will be sustained by the appellate courts unless the trial court overlooked, misunderstood or misapplied some facts or circumstances of weight and substance which will alter the assailed decision or affect the result of the case. We find nothing on record that would compel us to deviate from such well-entrenched rule or to overturn the trial court's appreciation of the credibility of the victim. Appellant's contention that the victim's testimony that she was raped should not be trusted because there are no signs whatsoever that she put up any resistance, is untenable. In People vs. Rodriguez, G.R. No. 129433, 22 Dec. 2000, 348 SCRA 244, 256, we held that it would be plain folly to say that the failure to shout or offer vociferous resistance to rapist is voluntary. On rape victim's submission to the criminal act of the offender. In this case, it is true that the victim did not put up a struggle. Jessie, her four-year-old brother did not even notice what was happening between the victim and appellant. However, it should be noted that the victim testified that she was thinking of kicking and scratching him but she could not do so as the body of appellant pinned her down, her hands were pinned against appellant's chest and appellant was threatening to kill all of them. [Citations omitted.] [En Banc, Justice Austria-Martinez, People vs. Bienvenido, G.R. No. [illegible], January 09, 2004]

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, July 16, 2004
15th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Is 38:1-6, 21-22, 7-8
Gospel: Mt 12:1-8

It happened that Jesus walked through the wheat fields on a Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and began to pick some heads of wheat and crush them to eat the grain. When the Pharisees noticed this, they said to Jesus, "Look at your disciples; they are doing what is prohibited on the Sabbath!"

Jesus answered, "Have you not read what David did when he and his men were hungry? He went into the house of God, and they ate the bread offered to God, although neither he nor his men had the right to eat it, but only the priests. And have you not read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the Temple break the Sabbath rest, yet they are not guilty?

"I tell you, there is greater than the Temple here. If you really knew the meaning of the words: 'It is mercy I want, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent.

"Besides the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Commentary:

There once a time is the Church, not long ago, when rubrics and regulations about miracles were given an inordinate importance. Those God's priest or the miraculous image presented to say was [illegible] looking back to the priests' and seeing when a woman stopped him and asked if he would heal her confessions. He didn't like to say, "Come to the church," because it was more than to with disease. So the confessions said, drew back to a grill or screen where a woman made her confession. Being an intuitive man he sensed the deepest agonies and feared her confession through the spoken of the church. Some came into the same manner, returning more strength and spiritual than he taught [illegible] praying the Rosary. There was no interior light in the air, nobody got succeeded crowded down to pray. Complete by the floodlights. A passersby stopped and said, "This must be a great book you're reading!"

Rules were brought into rubrics when there is no room left for emotions at play. It is not the rubrics wrong to be the rubrics can see. We are tired to be quick, it need to go into every nook and cranny of our lives and push us from within. We need spirit, or rather the Spirit, to guide us safely / often come back to these words from the Response to the Holy Spirit or the prayer:

Send Your Spirit, Divine guardian enlighten,
Where the Spirit, there good and [illegible],
Straighten out the quirks! Heal good our destiny.

Fr. Jerome Bullet, O.P., Dominican House of Studies, Mission Quezon City, UPO, Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City, Tel. 921-2098; Fax 921-7029; E-mail: ...@skyinet.org; Website: http://www.bible-mind.org; Bible-time Publications Inc.

FVR gets 1-way ticket to Baghdad

By Fe B. Zamora

FOR INSISTING that the Philippine contingent stay put in Iraq, former President Fidel V. Ramos yesterday was given a one-way first-class ticket to Baghdad, "where he can take the place of Angelo de la Cruz."

"I'll Ramos wants to save the Philippines in the eyes of the international community, then he should go to Iraq," said Rizal Unified, a member of the Iraq Solidarity Campaign.

Some BIC members held a lightning rally in front of the Export-Import Bank building in Makati City yesterday as Dalton delivered the confirmed booking certificate to Ramos' office on the 20th floor.

But Ramos was not at his office.

"The former president is having a dental checking," Ramos' media coordinator, Ed Maling told the hecklers.

The BIC said it would also give one-way tickets to Baghdad to at least four other persons who opposed the planned pullout of the 51-man Philippine humanitarian mission to Iraq as demanded by the militants holding the 46-year-old Cruz, a truck driver from Pangasinan, hostage.

BIC spokesperson Herbert Brocoa said they plan to deliver today (Friday) confirmed booking certificates to former President Fernando Poe Jr., Sen. Manuel Villar, former National Security Adviser Rafio Reyes, and former Philippine Ambassador to Iraq Reynaldo Parungao, who is now the editorial writer of The Manila Times.

PNP now mum on 'jueteng'

By Christian V. Esguerra

AFTER much ado about jueteng, the Philippine National Police has suddenly turned eerily silent about the illegal numbers game.

Beyond notably perfunctory updates on raids, Chief Supt. Ariel Querubin, PNP spokesperson, admitted the police had lost track of the conduct of the game since the much-publicized crackdown last December.

"Di na ma-monitor para sa'min anong may nahuhuli. Di kasi mo been monitored, kasi everyday dinoo ano sa media," Querubin told reporters Wednesday.

The latest report covering the period of July 5-11 showed that the PNP arrested 56 people and seized P10,189 in cash here from 20 operations nationwide.

A report for update covering the period of Jan. 1 to July 2 said that 2,741 people were arrested and P722,598 in cash here confiscated in 1,666 raids nationwide.

Still, the PNP leadership was silent on whether the illegal numbers game had been completely ousted or had gotten worse since PNP chief Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. announced in January that "98 percent" of the country had been cleared of jueteng.

Comeback

At least three police generals had admitted to the Inquirer in separate interviews that jueteng had staged a furious comeback shortly before the May 10 elections.

They were convinced the November promise of Ebdane he would eradicate the centuries-old numbers game in a matter of days was just that—a promise.

"Anybody who knows how jueteng works will tell you that it is possible to eliminate it completely," one general said.

"A [police] regional director or provincial director needs only to summon all known operators in his area and tell them to desist haven in engjueteng."

Another general agreed, saying eliminating jueteng on the part of the PNP was "very simple."

"The only problem is are police officials really bent on eradicating it? Or is everything just for show?" the third general said.

What keeps some officials from stamping out jueteng is the money involved, they said.

One of the generals recounted how he was once offered P1 million a month on top of a spot utility vehicle to ignore jueteng operations in the area he commanded as regional director.

He said he declined the offer in accordance with then PNP chief Pedrito Lacson's directive against jueteng.

Amid hostage crisis, GMA flies to Cebu

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

WITH the fate of Filipino worker Angelo de la Cruz still hanging, President Macapagal-Arroyo will be making her first out-of-town trip today since the hostage crisis broke in Iraq six days ago.

The President is scheduled to travel to Cebu this afternoon to make good on her promise to set up an extension of Malacañang Palace in that city.

She will be returning to Cebu City more than two weeks after taking her oath of office and being inaugurated as the country's 14th president at the Cebu Provincial Capitol grounds.

Ms Arroyo said during an a "Malacañang in the South" was the least she could do for the province that "made me President," after she garnered more than one million votes over her nearest rival in Cebu, which turned out to be her winning margin over actor Fernando Poe Jr.

The Palace said the President would formally inaugurate "Malacañang in the South" at 2 p.m. today and inform the officials who would man the office.

The Malacañang extension office is located at the old Bureau of Customs building along the just-completed P7-billion South Coastal Highway that links Cebu and Talisay cities.

The President picked the building in a surprise section she toured on July 5, according to a Palace statement.

Malacañang said BOC officials were now looking for another building to move the Customs customs district office to.

Presidential Assistant for Central Visayas Mila Guanzon said: "Malacañang in the South" fulfilled Ms Arroyo's promise to bring the government closer to the people.

A Palace official said the President would be holding office there at least one day a month.

From there, the official said, Ms Arroyo would be traveling to the other provinces in the Visayas and Mindanao.

The official said the President was returning to Cebu also to make good her commitment to the Carmelite nuns to attend the fiesta of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. *With Bernadette S. Parco, PDI Visayas Bureau*

CBCP spoke too much too soon on clean polls–Patriots

By Blanche S. Rivera

AN ELECTION bread watchdog has expressed dismay at the recent pronouncement by the country's bishops that the May 10 local race was free of massive cheating that may have affected its results.

Fr. Joe Dizon, head of the multisectoral group Patriots, questioned the basis for the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines' declaration upholding the legitimacy of the poll results during its recent plenary assembly.

"Was there a scientific basis? They said it was a report from the bishops, but where were the bishops during the elections?" Dizon said in an interview.

Patriots had collated data on alleged incidents of cheating and violence during the polls through its 70 spies and hotline sign-up volunteers who observed the elections two months ago.

Dizon said the CBCP on the other hand, only counted on ad hoc committees to study the reports of fraud submitted to it by the various political parties after its plenary meeting last weekend.

CBCP president Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla said the results of the committee's review would be for "internal reference" only to see how the dioceses could better monitor future elections.

Dizon said this belated effort to "appreciate" the documents on alleged electoral fraud showed that the CBCP's June 1 assessment of the elections as being "generally clean and peaceful... with no proof of massive cheating" was not the product of a careful review.

"The CBCP is a big problem. I think, first, the CBCP through archbishop Capalla has spoken early which was already a mistake and now he has spoken too much which is a double mistake," Dizon said.

Patriots has now turned its attention to the campaign to save the life of Filipino truck driver Angelo de la Cruz, who was kidnapped by Iraqi militants sending the withdrawal of Philippine troops in that country.

GENERICS
FACTORY PRICE
GENERICS

COPIERS
RENT • Canon • Direct • Save
Also Available - LIQUID COPIERS
COPYTRADE

ICSEC
KAPLAN

Maintain the right taste of your wine
Haier

HALF THE PRICE
FOR THE ASTRA SPEAKER SYSTEM!
NOW ONLY P1,750.00!*
Just buy one (1) Magic Sing Excellence Videoke Microphone and one (1) Song Chip at any Astra authorized dealers in Metro Manila. Claim your discount coupon and you can buy the Astra Speaker System, 50% off at P1, 750.00*, at the Astra Head Office only!
50% OFF
PROMO RUNS FROM JULY 15 TO 30, 2004
*Regular price is P3,500.00
Authorized Dealers
SM APPLIANCE CENTER • ABENSONS • ANSON EMPORIUM • ASTRA ELECTRONIC CITY • CROSSROAD DEPARTMENT STORE • DEECO • HOTEL RENAISSANCE • PRECISION • SOUND DIMENSION AUDIO VIDEO SHOP • GAISANO SOUTH GROUP • METRO GAISANO • GAISANO WHITE GOLD
METRO MANILA DEALERS
PROVINCIAL DEALERS
THE ASTRA GROUP, INC.

Orientique & Prime Home
We specialize in teak wood furniture (antique & new) from Indonesia, Indian, Javanese and Balinese doors, Sofas, dining tables and garden furniture. We do teakwood furniture for hotels, restaurants and resorts with most reasonable prices. Pension coopers in silk and wool and Indian durries. For inquiries please call or email.

OLYMPUS CAMEDIA
13 Ways to Shoot this Summer
COLUMBIA GLOBAL PHOTO SALES CORP

Come clean on Sabah, Sulu sultan urges gov't

By Jerome Aning

TRUSTEE of Sulu, who claims proprietary rights to Sabah, yesterday asked for transparency in any agreement that the government concludes with Malaysia that could affect the Philippine claim to the territory.

In a statement issued yesterday by his interim Supreme Royal Ruling Council, Jamalul Kiram III accused the foreign affairs department of "insincerity" in its determination of the roots of the dispute over Sabah, which now forms part of East Malaysia.

The Philippine claim to Sabah was to be one of the topics in the three-day consultative meeting here of the Philippine-Malaysia joint commission on bilateral cooperation that ended today.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Delia Albert and her Malaysian counterpart, Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar, will be holding a press conference today on the results of the meeting.

Kiram said he would not recognize any agreement reached by the two countries concerning the Sabah issue. He said he has issued a reprimand ordering his constituents to do the same.

He noted that previous agreements only "favored Malaysia and have inflicted socio-economic disadvantages and inhuman treatment and repatriation of Filipinos living in the disputed territory."

He said the Philippines had again left the Sultanate in the dark despite his offer to give the Macapagal-Arroyo administration the "limited leverage to discuss the issue of asserting the historic and legal aspects of the case".

Kiram said the Philippine government technically no longer has authority to pursue the claim since he revoked in 1989 the special power of attorney granted by his predecessor to the Macapagal administration in 1962.

Sabah, the northern part of Borneo island, originally belonged to the Sultanate of Sulu until it was leased to a British trader in 1878 and later became a British protectorate. It became a part of an independent Malaysia in 1963.

President Diosdado Macapagal, the President's father, officially laid claim to Sabah in 1962 after the Sultan of Sulu gave the government the authority to pursue the claim.

But succeeding administrations have placed the claim in the back burner in the interest of pursuing cordial economic and security relations with Kuala Lumpur.

Albert earlier confirmed that the Sabah claim, the arming up of a consulate in Sabah and the status of Filipino migrants there would be among major topics to taken up in the JMC.

Bus operators want heads to roll

BUS OPERATORS yesterday sought the suspension of two ranking transportation officials who had begun implementing the phaseout of old buses that could create a massive transportation crisis, especially in Metro Manila.

Bus groups called for the resignation of Undersecretary Arturo Valdez and Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board chair Maria Elena Bautista.

But both officials said they were merely implementing a policy.

"We are simply implementing a DOTC order as well as an LTFRB circular regarding the phaseout of 15-year old buses. Unless these orders are revoked, we have no choice but to continue implementing them," Bautista said.

Alex Yague, president of the Alliance of Bus Associations of the Philippines, warned that the policy could lead to a transportation crisis.

He said 95 percent of the 2,700 buses plying Metro Manila routes would have to be replaced and the refleeting would cost about $300 million since a brand new air-conditioned bus costs between P5 million to P6 million.

Yague claimed the transport sector was caught flat-footed when the LTFRB started implementing the circular to replace all 15-year old buses. Only provincial bus lines are now second hand units.

"We want the LTFRB to revoke the circular or to at least hold it in abeyance," said Yague.

Angelo: I am coming home

ing the bright orange garment that he had worn in previous videos. Other hostages beheaded by insurgents had been wearing similar garments in videos shown before they were beheaded.

Voiced over by a narrator, De la Cruz told his family not to worry about him, pointing out that he had had a change of clothing, an apparent sign that he was no longer under threat of execution.

De la Cruz also thanked President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for her decision to pull out the Philippine contingent in Iraq and asked her to publicize, according to the television station:

"I feel a little happy but I will be happier if we really are free," Felidelio de la Cruz, the truck driver's 28-year-old youngest brother, told The Associated Press by telephone.

De la Cruz's relatives, friends and sympathizers gathered in front of the family's home in Barangay Buenavista praying for his release.

Thanks to GMA

"I want to thank President Arroyo. Thank you very, very much. She heard our prayers here in Pampanga," he said. "We pray every night for our brother."

There was no immediate reaction from the government, which had become cautious after hopes for an imminent release on Saturday were dashed. The government rejected a news blackout Tuesday that left even foreign diplomats questioning what Ms Arroyo's strategy was.

The Philippines' move appeared to have worked, however, with the release of the video showing De la Cruz was safe. In it, he appeared less concerned than in the previous string of videos shown earlier during the crisis.

Just minutes before the video appeared, Iraqi Interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi said he had called up Ms Arroyo and asked her to control her decision on the troop withdrawal.

A day after the government said it was working to meet kidnappers' demands to withdraw the 51-member Philippine contingent in Iraq, officials and negotiators for De la Cruz's release were still going on with a group calling itself the Islamic Army in Iraq—Khalid Ibn al-Walid Brigade.

Very crucial

"We are waiting for his release and with our help and all our prayers hopefully we can have a safe release and (he can) be reunited with his family," Ambassador Roy Cimatu, the special Philippine envoy to the Middle East, said in a television interview from Baghdad.

He declined to comment further, saying only that the situation at the moment was "very crucial."

Cimatu warned that there would be grave consequences if his statement's were in be "distorted" by the press in Manila.

A news blackout imposed by the government's chief spokesman on De la Cruz's fate means little new information was available.

Run! I smiling"

Even so, De la Cruz's village in Mexico, Pampanga, was already preparing for the homecoming of the 46-year-old father of eight.

Men in Barangay Buenavista were erecting a big tent and painting signs of De la Cruz's house. They also decked out in yellow ribbons.

One of De la Cruz's aunts, Soledad Lapuz, applauded reporters, smiling, asked if there was news of her kidnapped relative, she said: "Look at my face. Am I crying?"

De la Cruz's wife, accompanied by Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas and other Philippine officials, is awaiting word of her husband's release in Amman, Jordan.

Confusion

The news blackout had created confusion over the fate of De la Cruz and whether the Philippine contingent was actually leaving Iraq.

Foreign Secretary Delia Albert said Wednesday that the Philippine contingent in Iraq had been cut from 51 to 40. But senior military and police officials said no troops had left Iraq.

Maj. Beatrice Fudila, an Reserve spokesperson, said movement orders had been issued yesterday. Fudila said the two planes on standby in Manila for an evacuation were now on other missions.

Chief Insp. Ismario Agulto, who is with the department in charge of the police contingent in Iraq, told Reuters that the 69 Iqmas officers in the war-torn country were continuing to go about their normal activities.

"There is no word yet, they are still there... They are working at the police academy as trainers. They are teaching the local police who are members of the former Iraqi military," Agulto said.

"They have not been given any orders for (a) new pull."

Sources said the order to evacuate would be issued only after negotiations had worked out the release of De la Cruz.

Acting Labor Secretary Manuel Imson said in a press conference in Manila that negotiations for De la Cruz's release were still in progress.

Imson confirmed that De la Cruz was still alive. Asked if De la Cruz was still in danger of being beheaded by his captors, Imson, in Ilonggo, declined to comment.

Officials at the Department of Foreign Affairs did not hold any press briefing on the situation. The whereabouts of top officials remaining the OFA crisis management team, including Albert, were also not disclosed to reporters. *Reports from Martin F. Manjil, Jerome Aning, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. AP, AFP and Reuters*

YES. the residents of Angelo's hometown are ready to welcome him back after the initial withdrawal of Filipino troops was announced by the Arroyo administration.

Vitug exits high court laughing

Associate Justice Artemio Panganiban was a confirmed taboo (joke or issue) at afraid of the mission, Vitug declared. The antitrust Associate Justice Santo Tinga was a shrinking violet, unable to declare his affection for a lady congressman.

No one "dared speak in advance" when Associate Justice Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez spoke during a debate, matter, the jolly retiree added. And Associate Justice Romeo Callejo "marked more in his sleep," he said. "Poor Mrs. Wilma Callejo!"

He praised Senior Associate Justice Reynato Puno's well-crafted pronouncements. It was "no mistake," he said, that Puno was considered the high court's "living Shakespeare." But, he added: "There is absolutely no truth to the rumor that Atty Lee Puno (the SC Clerk of Court and Puno's wife) wrote these pronouncements for him."

On a roll

Vitug, described by co-justices as the tribunal's "jovial counselors," was slapping down on his final reached the mandatory retirement age of 70.

But Vitug, the avuncular critic, was on a roll, and the Supreme Court session hall rocked with guffaws.

He praised Panganiban for his excellent summary. "It no longer surprised me whenever he called out as without us being forgotten points (as [rulings] that we outsiders had written." Also, Vitug sighed, "Justice Jay" was also a harpsichord harmed who didn't even sleep it."

The workmen remained mostly of high government officials, chief justice and fellow magistrates, among them, civil rights leader and former Senate President Jovito Salonga, former Chief Justice Andres Narvasa and historian chief Marie Pineda.

3 widows

Their laughter seemed to find Vitug's performance.

He thanked Tinga for keeping the justices healthy with a steady supply of bolos from Tagaytay. And three of those he put Tinga on the spot. "Oh, so, he is a bachelor, but he has long, only time will tell. If only one lady member of the court would say, 'yes!'"

There are three widowers in the high tribunal—Associate Justices Cuevas, Leonardo Torres-Santiago and Ma. Alicia Austria-Martinez.

The tribunal's spokesperson, Samuel Dean Jr., said Vitug's quip was really a long-running joke, "but the other members of the court hope it will bear fruit."

Relatives

With the lofty dose of good cheer, Vitug also dished out praise and assurances.

He described Gutierrez as the court's "most feisty" magistrate.

"She has a knack for seeing and getting to, the bottom of things. In oral argumentation, [her] straightforward questions are disarming even the best lawyers," Vitug said.

He once challenged Callejo to criminal law he recommend, and lived to regret the mistake: "What would have been my pensum instead became the sole drumming opinion. Books on criminal jurisprudence may soon have to be rewritten."

Vitug then labeled Associate Justice Leonardo Quisumbing the "newest recruit" of human rights advocate groups, noting that the latter's wife, Purificacion Rivera-Quisumbing, sits the chair of the Commission on Human Rights.

Lady Justice

He described Hilario Davide as "perhaps the most reform-minded Chief Justice this court has ever had." He praised hearings as the "personification of Lady Justice. She is the real champion of the oppressed and victims of injustice, and woe to those who do wrong, particularly in issues of children."

Vitug, one of four associate justices who publicly declared their position against the death penalty, pointed out that it was Santiago's "excellent argument" that usually led the court to affirm death sentences, especially on appeals.

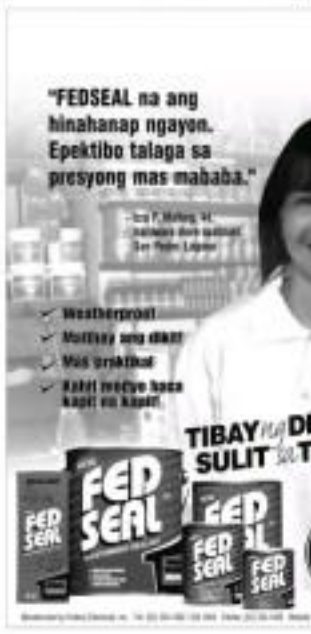
He said Associate Justices Adolfo Azcuna and Ruben Cuevas were "true gentlemen of the court." Martinez always spoke softly, he noted, "but when she does talk, she delivers lightning."

The "most articulate" member of the tribunal was Associate Justice Conchita Carpio-Morales, Vitug also said. "Nothing seems to escape her." Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, he predicted, will be Chief Justice "three to six years from now." He turned to Carpio's wife, Ruth: "Please take good care of him."

Last but not least

Last but not the least, for the newest appointee to the tribunal, Senior Sandiganbayan chief Minita Chico-Nazario, Vitug allowed himself a touch of chivalry: "It is my understanding that she begins her tenure as a true-blues, by leave of him, 'I am overwhelmed with trust.'"

VITUG: Court jester has last laugh



Saudi slammed for treating OFWs like slaves

From page A1

one small room lined with bunk beds. The doors to the rooms were locked from the outside, denying the women any freedom of movement for the two or three years of their contracts," it said.

The report said mistreatment of women was among the most disturbing findings. "Some women workers that we interviewed were still traumatized from rape and sexual abuse at the hands of Saudi male employers."

4 cases

HRW examined four cases of women who were victims of forced confinement and sexual abuse, including rape.

"In all four cases, the perpetrators—three of whom were diplomatic couples—did not face criminal investigation or prosecution. The report also has information about women whom Human Rights Watch found in a prison in Riyadh after they were arrested for illegal pregnancies," the rights watchdog said.

Despite a three-week visit to Saudi Arabia early last year, Human Rights Watch said it was denied permission to carry out field research and investigations, forcing it to interview workers mainly from the Philippines, Bangladesh and India in their homelands.

12-hr work days

The foreign workers occupy the lowest, hard-labor or aid officers in Saudi Arabia, the world's largest exporter of crude oil. Lured by promises of hefty pay, many workers often end up in the mercy of de facto employers imposing 12-hour workdays or more, the report said.

"The report is an indictment of many spurious private employment sponsors as well as Saudi authorities, including zealous secret interrogators and sharia court judges, who operate without regard for the rule of law and the inherent dignity of all men and women," HRW said.

The report detailed "the pervasive abuses foreign workers endure," showing "the abysmal and exploitative labor conditions many workers face, and the ultimate failure of the justice system to provide redress."

It also "demonstrated how foreigners detained in Saudi Arabia have been denied consular visits and denied as sign confessions that they could not read."

The report also listed "cases of beheading in which the executioners and families of the condemned men were not informed of the executions until after they were carried out."

Exaggerated

The Saudi Embassy in Washington said the kingdom had effective labor laws to protect all workers, including foreigners, and there was legal recourse for victims of abuse.

"We disagree with the report by Human Rights Watch and do not believe it is a fair or accurate reflection of Saudi Arabia and grossly exaggerates the few instances which in no way reflect the positive experiences of the millions of foreign workers in the Kingdom," the embassy said in a statement.

The HRW report, however, noted that the kingdom's highest religious authority, Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdul Aziz al-Sheikh, had already spoken out against the abuses in remarks published in a Saudi newspaper in 2002, according to him, Islam does not permit abuse of workers regardless of their religion.

No complaints reported

The report acknowledged that many foreigners had reported no complaints about their experiences in Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi Embassy said on its independent human rights commission had been established. "The kingdom . . . takes the issue of human rights very seriously and we continue to make progress in this regard," it said.

Legal system hit

The report also slammed court regulation methods in Saudi prisons and the country's legal system, saying confessions were often obtained through torture and workers complained of being forced to sign confessions—which they could not read—under the threat of more torture.

Some of the workers interviewed had been granted access to their embassies or to legal assistance before their trials, but lawyers accompanied them during trials, even in cases that resulted in the death penalty, the report said.

Recommendations

In a series of recommendations, HRW urged Riyadh to "suspend implementation of death sentences for female citizens and foreigners until it can be determined independently that certain was not used and confessions were not coerced."

It called on the Saudi government to end "the forced confinement of workers, impose substantial penalties on employers who confiscate the passports, and provide fair and equal compensation to the victims." Reports from Reuters and AFP

Sikh Sikh hands out shopping at a Riyadh mall passes by Bukowska bars who comprise the bulk of the 9 million foreign workers.

*Casualty Secure • Sbe

The Philam Group of Companies offers you a full range of insurance services: Life and General Insurance • Property and Casualty Insurance • Health Care Management
Pre-Need Plans • Banking • Mutual Funds • Property Development • Credit Cards • Electronic Processing Service • Reinsurance • Financial Advisory Service

The WORLD

Lito Lorente B. Banco

New Iraq car bomb attack kills 10; governor killed

AN AMERICAN soldier runs to the scene of a car bomb explosion in Baghdad, July 14 which killed at least 10 people. >>

BAGHDAD—Attackers detonated a car bomb near police and government buildings Thursday in the western city of Hadithe, killing 10 Iraqis, including three police officers, in the latest in a series of insurgent assaults on Iraqi authorities.

Police apparently thwarted a second attack in Hadithe, where police found a car filled with explosives. The explosives were defused with explosives. The explosives were defused with explosives. The explosives were defused

Blair cleared over Iraq, but faces poll verdict

LONDON—Prime Minister Tony Blair cleared again of deliberately hyping the threat posed by Iraq, faces two testing parliamentary elections Thursday in which opponents hope to capitalize on public opposition to the war.

Blair claimed vindication Wednesday after an official inquiry concluded that British intelligence on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction was flawed, but said the government had not deliberately distorted reports as it built a case for toppling Saddam Hussein.

"No one lied. No one made up the intelligence," Blair told the House of Commons, following publication of Lord Butler's report.

"Everyone genuinely tried to do their best in good faith for the country in circumstances of acute difficulty. That none of good faith should now be at an end."

Conservative Party leader Michael Howard had no intention of letting the issue rest. No accused Blair of taking what spy chiefs called "sporadic and patchy" intelligence on Iraqi WMD and then delaying it into fact.

"I hope no will not face in this country another war in this Conservative Party. And if we did and you identified the threat, would the country believe you?" Howard demanded.

Public faith in Blair and his government is after the by were being misled in two special elections Thursday prompted by the death of one Labor lawmaker and the resignation of another.

Both are normally considered "safe" seats for Labor, which won both by landslides in 2001 and holds 359 more seats than the combined opposition in the House of Commons. Labor and the Conservatives, who also headed the war, have campaigned on domestic issues, such as crime, education and health care.

The Liberal Democrats, the only major party to oppose the Iraq invasion, have run a campaign with platforms in the Leicester South and Birmingham Hodge Hill districts, which both have large Muslim populations.

John Benyon, a politics professor at the University of Leicester, said the Butler report could help Labour. "On the doorstep in Leicester South we have found that the Iraq war does not seem to be a big issue, and the Butler report is likely to make this less of an issue," he said. AP

A PROTESTER wears a mask caricaturing Blair July 14.

Norway ranked best to live in, US in 8th place

UNITED NATIONS—Norway, Sweden, Australia, Canada and the Netherlands ranked as the best five countries to live in but Africa's quality of life plummeted because of AIDS, said a UN report released on Thursday.

The United States was ranked in eighth place, a drop of one position from 2003 in the report that rates not only per-capita income but also educational levels, health care and life expectancy in measuring a nation's well-being.

The Human Development Index, prepared by the UN Development Program, is issued annually and includes every country for which statistics are available.

Iraq, Afghanistan, North Korea, and Liberia were among nations not included because of lack of data.

Norway has led the list for the past four years.

Aside from the overall index, the report produces indexes on women's equality, income inequality and consumption, poverty and other categories that countries use to measure development. In Canada, for example, the index has been used to advertise more attract investors.

The industrialized nations as a unit were in the top 20, three ranking close to one another. Belgium was in sixth place, followed by Iceland, the United States, Japan, Ireland, Switzerland, Britain, Finland, Austria, Luxembourg, France, Denmark, New Zealand, Germany and Spain.

At the bottom of the list for the seventh year was Sierra Leone, emerging from a decade of civil war. Right above it were Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and Burundi.

The world's poorest nation, East Timor, was included for the first time and ranked 150th out of 177 countries.

In Africa, the AIDS crisis reduced the average life expectancy in many countries to 40 years or less, making it the biggest factor in the decline of overall human development indicators, the report said. In comparison, the average life expectancy in Norway was 79 years.

At least 20 nations suffered development reversals since 1990, 13 of them in AIDS-hit Angola, Central African Republic, Lesotho, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe, the report said.

"The AIDS crisis cripples states at all levels because the disease attacks people in their most productive years," said Mark Malloch Brown, head of UN Development Program. Reuters

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SPORTS

FRIDAY, JULY 16, 2004

Kyowalite
LASTS UP TO 6 HOURS!

MYKE Ardina finds the going tough against Manalo in the last 18.

Ardina, Buen share lead; Gonzales 1 shot behind

By Jong Arcano

ARDINA: Parenting think

WORLD POOL

Bata survives; Django falls

FILIPINO billiards icons Efren "Bata" Reyes survived the grittiness of Oliver Ortmann to hammer out a 9-6 victory and chart a head-on collision with giant-killing compatriot Marlon Manalo yesterday in the 2004 World Pool Championships at the World Trade Center in Chinese-Taipei.

Manalo pulled off back to back shockers in the prestigious event, none bigger than the 9-5 triumph he fashioned out over fellow 10-baller Francisco "Django" Bustamante in the round of 32.

Prior to that, Manalo upset crowd favorite and Asian superstar Dang Ching-Shun in set up that tournament victory over Bustamante, a Filipino superhero in 2003.

"I'm a little bit sad [about beating Bata, normal," he told the official tournament website. "It's my job to win and if I hadn't have won, he'd have won, but the win over Yang was much better for me."

Manalo looked ready for his match in the last 16 against Reyes, who got his breaks going to recover from a 6-4 hole.

"Good selling, I can be world champion. But I still have to practice a lot," said Manalo, who reached the tournament's round of 32 last year.

A whopping $75,000—roughly P4,125,000—awaits the champion in this 126-man tournament while the runner-up gets $35,000 or P1,925,000 in the eight-day meeting of the three pool players around the globe.

By reaching the last 16, Reyes and Manalo are already guaranteed $5,000.

Also advancing to the last 16 was Rodolfo Luat, who ousted Ulas Hatice, 9-2.

Luat earlier defeated Oliver Davis to escape his loss in the Englishman in the 2003 edition in Cardiff, Wales. He will now face the winner of the match between defending champion Thorsten Schwarz and Taipei's Chang Chin-ching.

Reyes, the 2000 titlist, beat Alex Lyle of Holland in advance against Ortmann, nicknamed "The Machine" for his precision shots.

Bustamante, on the other hand, defeated Danny Bosworth to set up that meeting with Manalo.

Dennis Orcollo was set to face Konstantin Stepanov of Russia at presstime.

Reyneres salamated with a victory over local bet Wu Chia-Ching.

Rafael Gallego crushed Chen Filip-chieh of Chinese Taipei to set up a meeting with Marcus Chamat of Sweden, who upset former champ Ralf Souquet of Germany.

Among the Filipino casualties after two knockout rounds were Lee Van Corteza, Warren Bluntes, Antonio Gabica and Lassely Jelle. Lik Isaacd Jean "Boasang" Pavis failed to advance past the elimination round.

Marlon Bernardino

Cojuangco's Forbes Park meeting lures 29 NSAs

By Marc Anthony Reyes

SQUATTERS dad Jose "Peping" Cojuangco sent out invitations to the heads of national sports associations for a "get-together lunch" yesterday at his Forbes Park home.

Where everyone was already seated, the man seen by many as a crash for the presidency of the Philippine Olympic Committee could not hide his amazement.

Cojuangco said 29 heads or representatives of the 43 or so NSAs came to serve notice and reaffirm their support to Cojuangco.

If the POC elections were held yesterday, they claimed, the younger brother of former President Corazon C. Aquino would

LOOK WHO CAME TO THE PARTY! Cojuangco (center) with (from left) taekwondo's Gov. Edgardo Aglipay, softball's Harry Bogging, dominoes and athletics' Dr. [illegible]

have won by a landslide.

Cojuangco is expected to challenge incumbent president Lito Dayrit in the POC elections in November.

During the informal meeting that followed, taekwondo president and tennis head POC chief Robert Aventajado raised the possibility of doing away with the elections and letting the members instead to choose their leaders by acclamation.

Aventajado said this would prevent a bitter division of the POC membership.

Cojuangco reasoned that his aim is to unify the NSAs and all the stakeholders in Philippine sports. He said he does not want the POC to be ever more factionalized than it is at present.

Athletics' Go "Bing Hok, gymnastics' Cynthia Carolan and bowling's Steve Fernandez also spoke before the assembly.

Dayrit, who is attending an archery congress in Taiwan, couldn't be reached for comment yesterday last week, he said he was ready to offer Cojuangco a position in the POC "devoid of day-to-day responsibilities."

But his camp said he would rather begin his ultimate aim the preparations for the Athens Olympics this summer and the forthcoming Asian Games next year.

"What all the NSAs want is unity and that's all we talked about," said Aventajado.

The luncheon-assisted 29 NSAs that represent associations in swimming, boxing, aquatics, track and field, golf, tennis, archery, bowling, basketball, softball, soft tennis, canoeing/kayaking, aeabic, table tennis, volleyball, badminton, golf, gymnastics, equestrian, pencak silat, karatedo, judo, fencing, triathlon, body building, weightlifting, lawn ball, pentaque, cycling and wrestling.

STUNNERS: They will make heads turn at the FHM Grand Prix—(from left) Carolina Escobedo (Poland and Brazil's Caroline Kreiss, Erika Colmenares and Barrie. [illegible]

Accusations fly as golf pros unseat top officers

By Manuel Carallo

JUST when a hostama of tournaments is making the country's professional golfers play with renewed zest again comes a spate of terminations that could shake the very foundations of the group running their show.

A "coup" installed recent leadership in the Professional Golfers Association of the Philippines recently after a big group of pros accused PGAP president Antonio Noriega of mismanagement.

The group's leadership was installed in less than three furious after a heated meeting earlier this month at Alabang Golf Club, with treasurer Jose Antonio and Noriega's wife Lilia out of a regularity in handling the association's funds.

A third faction, which the "new president" belongs to, is taking a neutral stand "for the good of the association."

Vic Estrada, a member of the Catalunya team which won the first Philippine Sellers International in 1997, was elected president during that historical meeting, which was attended only by the nine members.

But the 46-year-old Estrada told the Inquirer he is not interested in the position "under these circumstances." He said he wants Noriega and Antonio to settle their differences.

"This is a problem that involves our people," said Estrada. "I do not wish to be president of an association that is not working hard unanimously."

Noriega yesterday said he is amenable to calling a general assembly meeting even as he reiterated that he still maintains to function as president.

Behind the controversy is the early 1 issue allowed by the association's constitution and by-laws.

Antonio is in the United States with his two children who are playing in the Junior World Championships in San Diego and could not be reached for comment.

Other members of the new board are Boy Alf, Ace Cudo, Willy Fernando, Gene Villareal, Willy de Torres and Pet Santos. [illegible]

Brazil tossers open up

LEILA Barros comes out of retirement to inject oomph on an already formidable Brazil squad as it handles the Dominican Republic today at the start of the Samsung FIVB Women's World Volleyball Grand Prix at the Philsports Arena.

The comely 32-year-old outlit an unfavorable spring and an infectious smile

[illegible]
3:30 p.m.—Opening Ceremonies
[illegible]
7 p.m.—Poland vs. South Korea

reminiscent her love affair with Filipino fans as she teams up with Fabi in the 6-foot-6 duo.

Colorful opening shot at 7:30 p.m. sets on in the three-day tournament that offers $55,000 for the champion team.

Poland, the European champion, slugs it out with host South Korea in the second game at 7 p.m.

Brazil, ranked third in the world, is the only South American team seeing action in the Athens Olympics in August.

And more than the $1,000 cop in the air ended in the finals on July 25, the fourth, the Brazilians will be using the rest of the tournament to fine-tune their game in time for the Games in Greece.

Also looking ahead is another veteran, setter Fernanda Venturini. Fans will also see the return of Erica Coimbra and Elisa Dias, two power-hitting spikers who led Brazil to the title in the 1999 edition in Japan.

The Dominicans are coming off their record-setting victory in the recent 14th Pan Am Games.

[illegible] Manuel Carallo

World body rejects RP bets in canoeing

[illegible] Three will be no Filipino participant in the canoeing/kayaking competition in the Athens Olympics on Aug. 13-29.

International Canoe Federation (ICF) secretary general Jose Perurena Lopez wrote POC president Celso C. Dayrit that the ICF had turned down the request of the Philippine Canoe Kayak Federation and the POC for a slot in the Athens Games.

POC president Jr. Jim Cha-Ua said he hoped to send a swimming distance (eating) competitions to the Athens Olympics on Aug. 13-29.

International Canoe Federation (ICF) secretary general Jose Perurena Lopez wrote POC president Celso C. Dayrit that the ICF had turned down the request of the Philippine Canoe Kayak Federation and the POC for a slot in the Athens Games.

POC president Jr. Jim Cha-Ua said he hoped to send a swimming distance (eating) competitions to the Athens Olympics after the session, Asia Davis, had received an e-mail from the ICF supposing that the Philippines nominate a female athlete.

However, the ICF message was rendered by Davis only on June 30, which was way past the April 28 deadline.

Ardina, Buen share lead ...

[illegible] 63 (320), was already eight shots behind. Ahead by Jen Ramos was 9-under-par 207 to deserve the hope. 7:45 at GM (3 EE and Nolan Espinosa) carded a 61 (7-2) but still behind by seven strokes to $50 spot.

Miguel Tabuena made the day's biggest rebound among the 50 best, burning in a three-under 68 at Sandy Creek to jump from 56th to 13th in the top 50.

Tabuena, however, still ended runaway leader Zachary Wright of Bataan by nine shots.

"It's going to be a big day for us tomorrow and we're hoping that luck will be on our side," said Luigi Tabuena, president of the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines which assembled the team spearhead by Jenny Ilef, featuring [illegible]

Meanwhile, Jungolf chief details "Mommy" Marinella de said a special message to the kids are to fight it out for the crowns, asking them to "believe a positive result from all over the Philippines."

Pro Philippine open (second leading a pendleton):

Class A (Long Hitter) [illegible]

Class B (Single Hitter) [illegible]

[illegible] 100, Jose Ma. Ilef 99-70-169; Ferdinand Ilef 99-70-169; Jose Ma. Ilef 99-70-169; Jose Ma. Ilef 99-70-169; Jose Ma.

ISSN 0116-2442 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Vol. 19 No. 239

OPINION

Publisher [redacted]
Editor in Chief [redacted]
Managing Editor [redacted]
Associate Editors [redacted]
Associate Editor for Readership [redacted]
News Editors [redacted]
Opinion Editor [redacted]
Business Editor [redacted]
City Editor [redacted]
Assistant Editor [redacted]
Editorial Consultant [redacted]
Chief Photographer [redacted]
Art & Design Director [redacted]

Board Chairman [redacted]
President [redacted]
Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing [redacted]
Senior Vice President for Corporate Services [redacted]
Vice Chairman [redacted]
Chief Executive Officer [redacted]

All rights reserved. Except as provided by law, no part of the Philippine Daily Inquirer may be reproduced or transmitted in any manner, electronic or mechanical, or stored in any retrieval system, without prior written permission.

Wages of adventurism

EDITORIAL

THERE may be honest over how the Philippines might have caved in to extremists in its decision to pull out its troops from Iraq in order to save Angelo de la Cruz from decapitation by his Iraqi captors. But the humiliation should be seen as a necessary end to a misadventure that started when the Philippines, understandably out of a legitimate concern over the stalking menace of terrorists at home and abroad, put its weight behind the United States in the invasion of Iraq ostensibly to get rid of Saddam Hussein and remove the threat of his alleged weapons of mass destruction and connection with international terrorism.

The misguided step—misguided because it assumed too much good faith in the claims of the United States against Iraq despite the paucity of evidence that Saddam had allied himself with terrorists and had been rebuilding his weaponry—paved the way for this retired Iraq theater where threats, kidnapping, violence, bombings and decapitations have become the staple.

This is not to blame the Filipino debacle on the United States. If our government insists on an independent foreign policy, then it must bear the brunt of its involvement in Iraq and its wages. Neither should this encounter or mitigate the guilt of the Iraqi terrorists who sold themselves to infidels but cowardly hide behind masks and behead non-combatants in an orgy of mindlessness.

But the decision to withdraw from Iraq was a political one, just as the Philippine support for the American adventure was propelled by political considerations. And so the reasons for the invasion become more contorted, disavowed and even nullified, the reasons for the continued occupation become not only technically untenable but also politically muddled.

In the United States, the reelection of President George W Bush has been put more and more in doubt. Same with the political prospects of his international allies such as Britain's Tony Blair and Australia's John Howard. Earlier this year, the Conservative Party of Jose Maria Aznar, Bush's Spanish ally, suffered an upset in the hands of the Liberals after the Madrid terrorist bombing.

The Philippine development finds uncanny parallelism with the Spanish debacle. After the terrorist outbreak bombing in Madrid that killed scores of people, the ride turned against the Conservatives; the Liberals were swept into power, and the new government quickly beat a hasty retreat from Iraq, ordering its troops home.

President Macapagal-Arroyo might have seen a fresh mandate, but because the opposition has up to now questioned her election, she does not want to risk a political backlash should the militants behind De la Cruz and further evade her base and mandate. Like the Spanish Liberals, she has beaten a hasty retreat, but with the difference that she surrendered even before any sign of terrorist bombing.

But she should not be entirely blamed for backing out since the only reason that she could present to the people should the decapitation take place and a backlash is unleashed from it is the wisdom and the rectitude of the Iraqi invasion. But as time passes without hard proof to back up the rationale for the war, everyone in the coalition loses ground and finds its position not only more and more untenable, but also reluctantly. Hence, the Angelo de la Cruz abduction and the government's equivocation in his capture.

Unsavory as their association may be, both the critics of the war and the militants and terrorists have found themselves in the bandwagon that is calling for the immediate withdrawal of the occupation troops from Iraq. There is not a conspiracy, but merely the dynamics of a situation that has emerged from the complicity of nations in the American campaign that has steadily but any moral claim.

As the American justification becomes more wobbly, American allies like the Philippines tend to look naive and lost; they feel the heat. Since the reasons for the war are turning out to be a sham, the members of the "Coalition of the Willing" find that they have been unwittingly hurled by the occupation of Iraq is prolonged, the justification for the invasion becomes less grounded and elusive, and the occupation more prone to attacks. This is so because the rationale for war may have long ago suffered decapitation from reality.

Greed and opportunism at PCSO

I HAVE good news and bad news about PCSO Chair Sweepstakes Ringgan De Leon. First the good news: She is certainly very, very petit from the stroke that felled her while conducting a conference of her staff in Baguio. She is already up and about, has no speech impediment and should be discharged from the hospital and back at work at the Philippine Charity and Sweepstakes Office soon.

Now for the bad news. The members of the board of directors, of all people, instead of taking personal care and pushing her off and supporting their boss in her hour of need, they are in a hurry to get rid of her. In fact, they passed a resolution last July 8 terminating the appointment of Dr. Loreli's staff. Director Vicky Cruz-Bautista didn't sign the resolution. They couldn't sack a lieutenant they've loved like it's running so much room and want to grab her position before she recovers! Four crude days after the PCSO, which owes its set-up to help sick constituents, are the first to take advantage of a sick fellow official. Reminds me of gendarmes in the jungle that pounce on their prey whenever some there is sick or weak.

The resolution also states that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo "The President issued a memorandum last June 30 ordering "all Cabinet members, heads of offices and ambassadors to the Philippines to effect such exercise, in a holdover capacity, to perform their duties and discharge their responsibilities until their resignation is accepted, or their respective appointments are appointed or designated and qualified." Dr. Loreli has not resigned, the President has not appointed a replacement, she has not been permanently incapacitated, and the President has ordered her to remain in office. But the board members in office seem to regard a presidential order in an envelope to grab the PCSO chairmanship.

The current scramble by camp followers for the spoils of office is not a pretty comparison to scavengers fighting over the carcasses of cars or injured animals and beginning to eat them even before they are dead. Sickening. The hyenas and vultures have to do it because of need. Hyenas don't have to, out of decency but they still do it because of greed.

* * *

While the President is reorganizing her new government, she should give priority to the reorganization of the Philippine Lotto and Racehorse Authority (PLRA) and the Bureau of Immigration. They abuse and waste money from foreigners in the country.

The PLRA is the successor of the Philippine Racehorse Club Spoom (PRCS) created by President Marcos in 1981 to entice tourists to invest in the Philippines. The program didn't take off because Marcos was overambitious in 1986. President Aquino revived it as the Philippine Racehorse Authority (PRA) but it was almost abolished by President Ramos because instead of earning foreign exchange, it incurred a P45 million deficit.

It was a retired Spanish lawyer, Ramon Collado, who pleaded with Ramos to give it another chance even without government funding. He organized the foreign retirees in the Philippine Retirement Authority (formerly Investment Foundation (Pramo) to take care of their needs, which the PRA could not do due to lack of funds. The Foundation would develop, operate and maintain retirement villages and communities.

For funds, Collado proposed to Ramos the discontinuing of the dependency funds of the retirees from 22 to only four. Then he proposed with the funds saved by the improper management for the Pramo out of the banks' earnings, leaving the dependents' interest earnings intact. He gave half of the one-percent fee to the PRA.

In a result of Collado's efforts, the PRA received an unexpected P45.4 million fee from PCSO in 1996 to convene to a P45.9 million loss in 1997. With more than enough money in the bank to sustain its operations, certain PRA officials allegedly started dipping their fingers into the agency's funds. When Collado blew the whistle, he was immediately dismissed as PRA consultant and the PRA-Pramo foundation memorandum of agreement was unilaterally canceled by the PRA.

President Macapagal-Arroyo and Collado theirs lawsuit against the PRA and its officials. The Makati regional trial court ordered the reinstatement of Collado as PRA consultant and the restoration of the memorandum of agreement between PRA and Pramo Foundation.

The PRA officials refused to follow the court order and were unfazed, unawed for contempt. They passed hail to race out of jail.

Twice, the PRA appealed to the Court of Appeals and twice the court dismissed the appeals and upheld the Makati RTC order which should have paved the way for reinstatement of Collado and the reincorporation of Pramo Foundation and Collado to final evidence of alleged irregularity in the handling of the retirees' and PRA funds.

The new PRA management opposition proceedings against Collado. With him out, the new chair could run the PLRA without anybody looking over his shoulder and the court cases would become mere academic exercises.

Collado has arrested and deported by the Bureau of Immigration. He was released only after this column exposed his continued illegal detention.

The new PRA chair has been replaced again by a former general manager who was removed in 1997 when it was discovered that the PRA was in the red by P45 million.

De Soto's 'Mystery of Legal Failure'

THE PERUVIAN founder Hernando de Soto, based now-at-home in Costa Municipal Arroyo, once described how the president of a democratic republic complained about the problem of "squatters and other illegal entrepreneurs" occupying the city and not only were [illegible] over their duties because ownership laws differed from state to state, from camp to camp," he recalled how the chief justice in his wonderful book, "Mystery of Capital," could be able to enforce property rights amid the "jungles of revolutionary and antagonistic."

That president was George Washington speaking in 1783, and the chief justice was the legendary John Marshall, speaking in 1830. But de Soto could very well have spoken of our Manila in 2004.

De Soto added "why capitalism triumphs in the West and fails everywhere else." In "The Mystery of Capital," he argues the answer lies—means the world's poor already possess the assets they need to make a success of capitalism but "they hold these resources in defective forms," namely: "houses without titles, crops without deeds, businesses that are unrecorded incorporation." By pushing the poor into the underground economy, they assess cannot be turned into capital, cannot be traded outside of local circles, cannot be used as collateral for loans. Their very lack of property has shut the law even more by remaining underground. they pay off local bullies or mafias, they live in constant fear of seizure from corrupt officials and they can never advance beyond small deals, they cannot advertise, they cannot send of low-interest loans. In short, they cannot enjoy the law these assets and make them greater capital.

"The crippling political agenda of 'left versus right' are largely irrelevant to the needs of most people in developing countries. Most people must run of the law" ... simply because if the law does not tolerate what they must ... If the law does not protect them, they can't safely defend themselves outside the law."

The legal system must therefore find a way to "formalize" the extralegal arrangements of the informal economy. The misconception is that "property" pertains to the asset, the thing, itself. On the contrary, "property" pertains to a social relationship, a relationship governed by law, between, Mom Jones, the owner effectively excludes others, and by which, De Soto adds, the asset becomes capital.

De Soto's prescription? "A strategy to capitalize the poor [could be] a president or prime minister who is more than a mere technocrat, who will take on a dozen fatal mistakes: take the perspective of the poor, accept the elite, and transform the bureaucrats who are the mainstreams of the old system.

Philippine democracy, strangely enough, raises the former barriers against these defenses.

Democratic elections effectively compel a Filipino president to see the world through the eyes of the poor who can only vote, and to adopt policies to make countries by the rich who are few.

There, too, are conflicts inherent to the present agenda. For instance, De Soto's first target for law reform is small, as the Philippines, government investment in mass, per unit necessary to make those areas accessible. But just think: How much trouble will it take to clear only informal claims of squatters? I am already imagine all the documents to one day of retirement. How late can we keep our toll fees or major highways, and for how long? Are all examples to keep tolls cheap—every one knows it's guilty pleasure politics to be honest? Or the slow speedy determination of roads. Isn't it easily moved by our dominant selfishness—in which point there is a clear as to appease vast increases, with the inevitable lingering. How long can we keep our power rates down with government subsidies, again with the blessings of our courts? But just wait until we have a brownout. "Economics" and, once again we scramble to find power generators lately as questions have taken mentality life is back to normal). Our politics ignores the reality and the order, for business to its telephone and the genie.

Co-opting the elite is even more intractable. I would have thought that Ms Arroyo, likewise of the Philippine elite, would have a easy batting down one, but democratic necessities have forced her to consider all kinds of concessions and their powers. Governance becomes a daily game of accommodation and political payback. Cutting congressional pork barrel, for instance, is a near-terrible matter because it is the only way to get things done, it is a non-starter, because for our congressmen and senators, pork is an organic part of the congressional school.

Democracy, too, I thought, would make it easier to confront the bureaucracy. After all, as Edsa I in 1986, we assure that henceforth the sanctioned (the bureaucracy) shall be accountable to the elected (the politicians), who are in turn accountable to the electorate (the people). What we didn't count on was that in a populist democracy, the people are the bureaucrats as their sorts, their fellow struggling salaried men. But those rushes, the enemy is the politician. Because the reformist drive is motivated by unwashed interests, whose final purposes are ignored unfortunately on the highly politicized bureaucracy, the politician doesn't get to be the intended beneficiary of reform but instead, with a populist mind, continues every poignant plea by bureaucrats who resist change.

Reversal of policy

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE EVOLUTION of a Filipino-mark citizen in Iraq from the hands of Islamic militants was narrowly averted last Wednesday when the Philippine government capitulated to their demands to withdraw the whole Filipino contingent to Iraq a month ahead of the July 30 timetable earlier set by the government.

In capitulating, the new government of President Macapagal-Arroyo made clear she gave priority to domestic concerns (i.e., saving the life of Angelo dela Cruz, Angelo de la Cruz) over the foreign policy implications of the early pullout that governments announced on Wednesday that a half battalion's eight of the 51-member contingent, operating diplomatic pressure from Washington and other capitals, will stay on the area center "Goodness of the Rolling" (Australia and Poland) which had strongly urged Manila not to give in to the militants' demands.

The Philippine withdrawal last week sent Hughes, while playing a small in a narrow time had delivered on from Egypt to Iraq, by the militant Khaled ibn al-Walid Brigade. The group threatened to behead him if the Philippine government didn't withdraw its troops by July 20.

Justifying the domestic political fallout from an execution, President Arroyo made a dramatic reversal of policy by announcing the withdrawal. It is not clear whether the captors considered the reversal of policy sufficient reason to back down from their demands and whether they would free De la Cruz before July 20. What is clear is that the hostage-taking was the first test of Mrs Arroyo's policy of sensing support for the U.S.-led war on terrorism and the Philippines' participation in the campaign of her administration to withstand extreme sustaining from terrorist forcing the solidarity of the alliance.

The hostage issue has divided opinion evenly in Manila, but the President's decision left no doubt that she had learned the lesson from the administration of former President Ramos whose populistic plummeted after he failed to save all Overseas Filipino workers, the Corazon Aquino regime, in Singapore.

The President's decision was not an easy one to make. She had to move the axes of realizing either the blackmail of the hostage-takers or the protests of the US and the Philippines' allies in the anti-terror coalition.

The United States said that Philippine decision would "send the wrong signal to terrorists" and expressed disappointment that it was made as a result of terror. Iraq "is fighting for stability and peace." This warning was echoed by Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, who urged the Philippines not to give in to the demands because "we will tell you a price if they do." Downer was speaking on the 7:30 Australian program in the run-up to remarks made upon returning overseas from the declaration of opposition leader Mark Latham that a Labor Party government would withdraw Australian troops in Iraq by Christmas. Howard's decision was that the US government and international forums, following statements of US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Armitage that Labor was "with them in the middle" on including the Philippines in the coalition. Armitage said that Labor hasn't changed that the United States was interfering in domestic Australian politics.

The argument that members of the anti-terror coalition would "pay a price" for Manila's decision was reminiscent of the wide reaction of other countries to the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq. The bombing was followed by a change of government. New Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero made good his pledge to pull out Spanish troops by June.

The bombing demonstrated that terrorist attacks could force governments to change their foreign policy in the direction of the Filipino truck driver has forced the Philippine government to accelerate its timetable of withdrawal of Filipino troops. The Philippine decision was a blow to the "20-list international contingent which has already been weakened by the Spanish pullout.

The Philippine withdrawal does not physically weaken the contingent. It has taken presence. It is made up of non-combat troops who do not have front line missions. The effect of the withdrawal is symbolic. It damages a key element of the Bush administration's strategy for Iraq, which is to put an international face on the military force accompanying the occupation.

Militants also relied to pressure South Korea weeks ago by kidnapping a Korean national in Iraq and demanding that Korea drop its plan to send 3,000 troops to Iraq in August. The Japanese also backed down after faced refusal.

Many Filipino truck drivers will remain in Iraq after the withdrawal of our troops. They will be exposed to high risks of militant attacks.

The withdrawal of the Philippines from Washington would undermine the Manila's decision by reducing economic and military aid, which militants threaten to use to fight domestic insurgencies, most of all the anti-rebel activities of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The MILF has formed the Children Task Force as terrorist network. Such a network would be self-defeating in all security measures.

The withdrawal of the Filipino peacekeeping contingent may put Americans in the Philippines in greater danger. Americans have become the chief target of Abu Sayyaf attacks. Whether or not there are Filipino troops in Iraq does not determine the level of risk of terrorist attacks in the Philippines.

The abduction of De la Cruz held hostage for only the Filipino driver has also thrown the Philippine policy. The issue also shows how we are hostage to US foreign policy interests because of our close alliance with it. Washington can adopt a position or course in a way to put security interests in the center and the rest.

The way to go

AT LARGE

Rina David

"TRAGIC, unnecessary and preventable" is how Henry Sabio of PopulationTech, speaking at the press conference on World Population Day, describes the deaths of women due to unsafe induced miscarriages and stillbirths.

The Philippines has the highest maternal mortality rates have been going down, the decrease has been much too slow. The rate of maternal deaths remained at over 200 per 100,000 live births in 1990, and is estimated at 172 per 100,000 live births today. The Philippines has the dubious distinction of having the annual number of women who die each year from pregnancy and childbirth complications has increased. An estimated 1,900 women die of maternal deaths every year. That's 5 women every day. (When I started writing about the latest issue last Sept. 10 years ago, the estimate stood at 2,000 maternal deaths a year.)

But the scope of the problem cannot be measured in numbers alone, Sabio stressed. There are grave "discrepancies and variations" in regional maternal mortality estimates, with women of reproductive age in regions like the ARMM (with 1,000 deaths per 100,000 live births) and Eastern Mindanao (over 300/100,000) facing nearly double the risk of women elsewhere in the country.

Figures on maternal care would explain these variations. The percentage of women receiving prenatal care in the ARMM is only 55.2 percent, in Eastern Mindanao it is 70.6 percent, in Southern Tagalog it is 93.9, while in the NCR the percentage stands at 92.1. In the ARMM, per rural area is available only to 49.8 percent of women, while in the Cordillera only 77.1 percent of women in the Cordillera Peninsula.

The ARMM area has the lowest percentage among the regions of births delivered by a health professional (25.7) and of births delivered in a health facility (10.1).

* * *

OVERALL, only 60 percent of Filipino women deliver with the assistance of a doctor, nurse or midwife, and only 39 percent give birth in a hospital, clinic or health center. Nationally only 77 percent of mothers receive the minimum prescribed check-ups and 19 percent of women receive post-partum care.

In a conversation, Fabros pointed out that

"Every pregnancy is a process that takes nine months," noted Marilita Abaya of the late Fernando, one of new local government executives in the area concerned. Alleviating the problem includes not only providing more but also better health services. "That means that they have more than enough time to save the money for their deliveries, so there's no reason why they should be transported when the due comes."

In Manila, she said, "we don't believe in

PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE
The National Association of Philippine Newspapers

Access to medicines

I WORRY as more than all the politicians about "MDR drugs," especially with the ongoing international AIDS conference in Bangkok, sought by making people aware of cure, as they begin to consolidate. "Oh, there's a cure now for AIDS, so why worry?"

Sorry, but there are many reasons to still worry. First, these drugs are not cures. The most accurate technical notion "cure" is a misnomer," which

means they work against the virus but cannot ERADICATE, but only in terms of slowing down their reproduction, with consequently diminishing the virus from a person who has been infected.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

My doubt, the results are far dramatic. Up to the mid-1990s, whenever I had to lectures in workshops and seminars, I'd point out that a person with HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) would be very fortunate if he or she lived 10 years after an infection. Those days, I never people who survived over around 20 years ago, and are looking very normal and productive lives. Many are working in the development sector, in effect, the medicines have transformed AIDS infection into as chronic disease like diabetes, with lifelong treatment.

Sadly though, this lifelong treatment of HIV happens mainly in developed countries. In the Philippines and many other developing countries, expenses made HAART available a few years, which takes me to the second reason why in this age of "MDR drugs," we still need to worry: the antiretroviral are mostly too expensive, running to about $10,000 a year. That's more than a half a million pesos.

The situation isn't all that hopeless though. The $10,000 applies to medicines purchased by large multinational drug companies. In recent years, there have been attempts, mainly in Thailand, Brazil and India, to bring down the costs. One Indian company, Cipla, has dramatically brought down the cost to almost $200 a year.

Considering that there is still time to make a profit-offering the medicines at that price, you can imagine what's being asked in by the multinationals. As usual, these companies claim Cipla's drugs are inferior and that the medicine are violating patent laws, but to the mean time, they have also lowered the prices of their drugs, responding to a humanitarian concern. The United Nations and the US government have also given into the act, offering funds to help purchase the medicines from these large companies.

How all did helped Filipinos with HIV and AIDS? Not much. In doctor to the medicines remains limited. A few are able to get their drugs from the Philippine General Hospital's special counseling, but most Filipinos with HIV are assigned to a short life. The funerals continue, and I am sometimes shocked to hear the deceased was infected only three or four years ago.

But what, I remind myself, we can have Filipinos dying of other diseases for which curative drugs are available, from hypertension (high blood pressure) to tuberculosis. The high doses of these available diseases only highlights the very pressing need to implement a national policy on medicines.

There is, however, the problem of prices, and I still see it primarily as a problem of the government's lack of affordability cast in the drug propounded, which I have written for high blood pressure. In the Philippines, a 40 mg tablet of nifedipine, a standard preparation, costs P11 for over the last few months, because age often makes me forget to pack in my medicine for the day. That's an unsustainable long drug medicine in other countries, and the differences have been shocking.

In Thailand, where you can actually go around drugstores and bargain, the same branded preparation, Adalat, runs between 60 and 90 each. I was amazed at how cheap it was, until I got to Bangkok and found that generic nifedipine at the price of branded ones something close to something like P4.

Curious, I asked about the costs of other versions of propranol, both branded and generic. Lo and behold, the prices were further down to as low as P3, and I've learned some of those generic brands are also available here.

I know that local multinational companies are going to be writing on the editors and to me attaching these cheaper versions as "inferior" and "counterfeit." Give me a break and spare me the excuses. Are Indian and Thai physicians friends did want the not-about this problem and would refer me to reputable sources for the generic? I gave me the "real" drugs, which I've taken without problems.

Let me use one more drug in an example: the antihypertensive enalapril. Sold under the brand names Vivlin and Zyness, a single tablet costs almost P50 in Bangkok, generic versions are around P20 in the Philippines. Yet I've heard several drugstore owners who it was so cheap and the answer was always the same: competition. The Thai government has its own drug manufacturing facility, and also supports local generic manufacturers. When the patent expires for a drug, several manufacturers will rush in to produce it, creating more competition and driving down the costs. And even the multinationals are forced to bring down their prices.

Some of my friends in the environmentalist spotlight may explain that they price drugs according to what the local purchasing power is, yet then can only smile when I point out this is the same justification that the Philippine Armed Forces used to purchase, where the prices of medicines are indeed higher than in Third World countries, governments often subsidize the costs of medicines.

It's sad that we've modeled our health care system, in effect, on the profit motive of the pharmaceutical companies, instead of the US, which leaves prices mainly to "free market forces". Sure, there's Medicare, similar to our Philhealth, but even this assistance for medicines are woefully limited. It's not surprising that even American politicians, especially the elderly with their many drug needs for chronic diseases, are considering buying U.S. drugs at cheaper prices in Canada or find ways to bring down the costs. This has included exploring the possibility of importing lower-costing brands from South Canada.

Our own government has negotiated and such a list of possible importations, but it's never been implemented. Meanwhile, but the supplies are limited to government health facilities.

Access to medicines certainly involves more than costs, but affordability remains the key issue and government must exert more effort to find ways, perhaps even going into drug manufacturing and importing, or providing incentives to local drug companies that are serious about producing generic or cheaper branded preparations. Both governments and private businesses companies also need to find ways to increase support for essential drugs. Ultimately, we need to remember that people die not just because of poverty but because of a system that has put profit over people's health and is letting drug prices go so Filipinos won't have to continue to suffer and die needlessly.

The INQUIRER is a member of the
PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE
The National Association of Philippine Newspapers

Japanese war-time propaganda

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

EVERY summer, my students refer an essay where they try to figure out what the world was like when their parents were born. There are suggested to interview their parents, who has by remember something, and to dig up the newspaper on the day they were born. It is a revelation for them to go back two decades and realize that much that they and about the past are still relevant to the present.

This exercise in the historical method is likewise educational for me because I learn about the events in which my students live and work. As a historical line baby who believed that Stalinism was the ultimate evil, I was humbled to discover I am considered Jurassic by my students because stories—and to some, even Elvis (1956—a boy who died before they were born. Reading student papers helped me realize that there is a world outside the late 19th century Philippines, Rizal, the Philippine Revolution and the Filipino-American war.

In order to effect reforms, I decided to move away from my textbook-issues to try and revise current life in the Philippines during the Japanese Occupation. To do this, I opened a bound volume of "The Official Journal of the Japanese Military Administration" which I bought on a used bookstore exchange table hunting for a false fit. A diploma from a US ivy League university which of what I know about the Japanese period I got from books from the reminiscences of people who lived through the war. Reading the old Tagalog films where the hero single-handedly killed a whole battalion of Japanese with one gun and ammunition reloading!

The excerpts randomly who Diplomatic during the 1942 Christmas where the government declared the launch of the Philippines from pre-colonial status to the present to assume a limited form that paralled before the Quezon Government. In the Japanese period then, a Filipino soldier killed all the enemy soldiers, grabbed a Japanese flag

From cradle and mangled on it. Then beyond Secretary Domingo Vinzon jumped out of his seat and said something to the effect that we do not need Japanese help to be free. The rest of the time between past and present was breathed during the parade that I found fun but with some glaring historical flaws.

Japan may be technically rotten today, but during the war it was completely different nation. Of course, you believe Japanese propaganda. For example, the photo section of "The Official Journal of the Japanese Military Administration" shows smiling Japanese soldiers acting on the ground surrounded by very clean but ugly Filipinos. The women are screaming hosannas and the caption reads: "Peace loving Filipinos driven from their beloved homes because of the war are coming back to their homes and are thankful to the Japanese Imperial for the warm protection of the Japanese officers and soldiers, and devotedly and proudly getting musical instruments to their hands. Morning Asahan Province. March 5, 1942."

In another photograph, a Japanese soldier presents rice with soft drinks to two prisoners. The caption reads: "Japanese soldiers are strong against their enemies, but gentle and kind to peace-loving people. One of the views showing the Japanese soldiers presenting comfort goods and candies of the Military Administration, Sorsogon Province, March 3, 1942."

Here was a clear case where the so-called primary sources could misleading distortion from everything I have learned and heard. Of course, this cannot be taken at face value, but should be read in the context of everything else that has come to us about them.

Reading this journal is an attempt to recreate life in those times proved to be hilarious. The very first page republished a proclamation issued June 2, 1942 that covered the occupation of Manila. It reads:

"The Japanese Armed Forces wish to share the well-being of the officials and people of the Manila land. With for the arrival of Japanese and Philippine officials.

"1. Regardless of nationality, no one needs suffer.

"2. Offering resistance or committing a hostile act against the Japanese Armed Forces is any Filipino or foreigner will be severely punished. Therefore, everyone should come under the protection of the Japanese Armed Forces without shedding even one drop of blood and should continue daily business as usual.

"3. Anyone who is under any of the following will be considered as interfering with the well-being of the native people and therefore shall be subject to death penalty: Robbery or committing any of said crimes. 3. Those who shoot bombs or hand grenades or possess or transport them. 4. Those who operate or break any existing means (of) of politics, economics, industry, transportation, finance, etc. 5. Those who disturb the minds of the officials and the people. 6. Any secret disturbing or misleading acts. 7. Espionage acts."

"Those who report to the Japanese Forces any flagrant offense or prowler any of said crimes will be rewarded by the Imperial Japanese Forces."

Aside the above, one can imagine the stunning effect of the Japanese Occupation. Reading the above helps us understand why some people refer to the pre-1942 period as "proper" (proper time).

* * *

(comments are welcome at aocampo@admu.edu.ph)

Gross income taxation will not translate to effective collection

I DOUBT the administration's plan to pursue prime income taxation for corporations (PIT, G/IS/NI) deserves a second thought. Its obvious twin objectives of raising revenues and simplifying tax systems (the latter is of course merely secondary) may involve unwanted results.

A basic consideration in drawing the basis that should be proposed pertains to the sum of sales for availing concession or of goods manufactured and sold for manufacturing firms. But such basis are subject to as many deficiencies as there are varying sources of business opportunity. That, in tax jurisprudence parlance would be unfair. Alternatively, before providing different tax rates for different industries, a reliable, comprehensive and careful study of the various industries must first be conducted. Given so, the applicable tax rates would still end up undesirable because, among sub-groups in the same industry, the gross profit ratios (or sales) are likewise known to widely vary.

Admittedly, gross income taxation will plug loopholes for underreporting taxable net corporate income. But, I am sure, it will also open newer opportunities for manipulating the rates in the declaration of the taxable gross income. Moreover, a critical component of cost is not such paying item. Accountants know that by merely underrating the year end inventory the gross income is correspondingly reduced. Take the tax code provides for a so-called inventory method of accounting the cost of sales. But tax examiners themselves would agree that this could at convenient for subsidies process, and often leads to tax assessments that are more judgmental or arbitrary than absolutely unreasonable. For sure, the annual inventory reports are usually within the taxpayer's control, unlike the deductible expenses under the net income system, which are directly and unexpectedly verifiable from vouchers, receipts and invoices. For another, it is difficult to probe into the authenticity of ending inventories since, at any audit time, they would have been used up and exhibits longer be physically accounted for.

Given the many nuance mechanisms that have come out wrong, it is unfortunate that the country's budget deficit continues to worsen. Others see gloomy but serious calories. The first is interest, or rather—meaning, the tax burden on some public debt benefits or others. The second is efficiency... assuming cause do not look out to our region. Only when our taxation system shall have essentially passed these acid tests will the public view such low tax measures in their certitude.

—ALDY L. CORDEL
14 Ferrum St., Golden Country Homes, Alangilan, Batangas City

LETTERS

Regular, sound breakfast fare

MY doctor said a good, sound breakfast is important to one's health. So in the mornings, between my coffee and my toast, I eat the "RLD" regimen.

It is cigarette, substantial, appealing, intelligent and certainly enjoyable.

Some days some distasteful ingredients are present—low-grade advertisements denigrating honorable public officials, poor English, etc. But on the whole, the regimen is interesting and pleasing.

—FREDA AFRIL
14 Evelina Gimi St., Alabang Hills Village, Alabang, Muntinlupa City

Pulling out RP contingent from Iraq

IT is remarkable and comforting to note that in the past four months, in very diverse situations, the Filipino nation is again united, praying for forgiveness for its Christ. This is one right every Filipino is willing to stand up for.

I said my email essay on the demise for the Filipino hostage Angelo de la Cruz began from my husband was [illegible] the humanitarian situation in Iraq. It was like my husband were in the navigation zone and there was no way of knowing if he would ever come back.

I know how it feels to lie under enemy attack wondering if my family will ever be whole again. Every day, I had to look out for every vehicle of new design coming down the street would not be one of those kidnapped or killed in some ambush there. I cried. Bullets of wait whenever I got on talk to find out the phone after twenty-four hearing from him. I know the feeling that corrupt men can't break where are a single government agency can give a definite or a reassuring answer to requests for any news. Yearning.

But what irked me the most was that even as my husband served in Iraq with dedication, the government's support for him and his family was very much wanting.

How anybody ever cared to ask when happened to the hostage contractor for the Philippine Embassy in Iraq, and whether that family is well accounted for? Does anyone care to know what happened to the first Filipino—contingent in Iraq during their seven months stay there?

Four months after coming home, he and the other members of his group are still waiting for the bonus the government promised them for serving in Iraq. Moreover, left without a [illegible] unit, they have been practically relegated to attend by to a self-serving government which obviously has exhausted its use for them. I am disappointed, to say the least.

It is this experience that has led me to believe we have to pull out of Iraq—to spare families from the prolonged agony of separation from their loved ones, and for the government to stop using its elected soldiers and policemen as expendables in its servile ways.

Before attending to the problems of others, let us first solve the ones that we have here at home. Let us stop sending people to places like Iraq. Instead, let us create opportunities here and improve the living conditions of our workers so that they don't have to go elsewhere for greener pastures. The dollars is definitely not worth the lives of these men—or of the OFWs, their families, and of their children.—Shame and address withheld upon request

I am against the early withdrawal of the Philippine humanitarian contingent in Iraq. I appeal to the heads of Islamic countries to abide for the release of De la Cruz as well as of the other hostages from other countries. I hope that the United Nations will not be left out. It is stated in the Law of Unfair that the life of everybody is sacred.—Abdullah Ahmad Bargan, Ivani, Lebanon, Batangas

His one reason for la Cruz to die, but survival means to lose several by coming in to blackmail... on who slaughter innocent civilians. It is not the Arroyo administration which abducted De la Cruz. The terrorist murdered mercilessly even when one of their own was beheaded. We should withdraw our troops on our own volition—as scheduled on Aug. 20—not upon the dictate of terrorists.

National policy should not be dictated by brigands who maintain the definitions to make dark point. If we yield to them, we running before the community of nations will have lost our dignity and self-respect as a free, [illegible] as a country of unprincipled wimps who do not understand the meaning of nationhood.

What assurance is there that once we pull out our troops, Islamic radicals will stop attacking us? None. As long as we have millions of Filipinos willing to risk themselves in Islamic way because there is not no [illegible] had in our homeland, the case of the la Cruz will certainly not be the last for the nation.—Rene Pacion, Perth Amboy, NJ USA

As the whole nation awaits the release of De la Cruz by his captors, the opportunistic left, the media and the politicians are taking advantage of the situation to bash at the government.

However, they fail to celebrate the [illegible] as the left-[illegible] have no regard what-soever for human lives. It is not the fact-finding mission to find a the culprit in this crisis.

These terrorists prey on defenseless people like De la Cruz. He should never forget what they did on Sept. 11, 2001 in New York. He should never forget what they did on Dec. 30, 2000 at the Light Rail Transit station in Manila. He should never forget the abduction of hundreds of people and the subsequent beheading of many of them in Mindanao.—Oleo Reyes, Carmona, Laguna

The welcome mat of the peace-loving Christ is a timely and right decision.

First, it will spare the life of a Filipino who is a non-combatant and is in Iraq only to earn for his family.

Second, the decision will not affect our relations with other countries as the Philippines is actually a strong advocate against terrorism.

Third, the pullout of our contingent will not create a dent in the American program for Iraq.

Fourth, the decision was not sanctioned by the UN. US President George Bush should not contradict negatively on that which stand on the Philippines' humanitarian decision.

And lastly, the Philippines has its own war against terrorism and it needs every able-bodied military man in that fight.—Jose Fernandez, Los Angeles, USA

VOICES ON INQ7.NET

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Burgonio

Gov't workers demand ₱3,000 pay hike

By Carla P. Gomez and Joey Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Public employees in 30 government agencies, owned and controlled corporations, schools, health centers and district hospitals here on Wednesday headed to demand a ₱3,000 across-the-board salary increase.

The participants in the Negros Government Employees and Teachers Summit at the Negros Occidental Technological Livelihood Center in Bacolod City also approved three resolutions that will be submitted to the 14th Congress when it opens on July 26.

The summit was organized by the Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage) and the Association of Concerned Teachers-Negros (ACT-Negros).

The resolutions signaled their demand for the salary increase, opposition to the rationalization program of the government and the campaign against mismanagement, negligence and corruption in the Government Service Insurance System.

The workers said they receive an average monthly salary of ₱9,000, which could barely meet the family's needs with the cost of living pegged at ₱19,079 monthly.

The ₱3,000 demand is long overdue and the relief for more than 1.4 million government workers nationwide is imperative, they also said.

They also rejected the promise of the government of a 10 percent increase, saying that such move would only widen the gap between the low-salaried workers and those occupying higher positions.

Ben Abunda, vice regional chair of Courage, said they also condemn the attempts of the government in pushing for a rationalization program that could displace 300,000 state workers because of massive retrenchment, abolition and contractualization of services.

The group also expressed their distrust with the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), saying that the agency is guilty of delays and could no longer be relied upon to provide financial assistance to government workers.

In Tacloban City, after holding a series of wage consultations in different parts of the region, the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board in eastern Visayas is "leaning toward the issuance of a new wage order," for the region's more than 1.1 million private sector workers.

Florencio Aguilos, wage board secretary, said no decision has been decided on but during the series of public hearings that they have conducted, workers and management agreed that there was really a need to adjust the current wage structure in the region.

On July 10, Aguilos added, the result of the consultations that they had conducted in all provinces (excepted towns and cities in the region) would be presented before the labor and management sectors in a public hearing.

The hearing, he said, is the last step to "meet" for the last time on this issue.

The public hearing would be held at the training center of the regional office of the Department of Labor and Employment in Tacloban.

HIGH JOB
A youngster cleans plates (right) in a Baguio City canteen to help augment his family's income. Cleaning glasses has proved to be his work following the onslaught of Typhoon "Igme" on the city

Maintenance pushes Pangasinan into 30-hr blackout

DAGUPAN CITY—Pangasinan is host to two major power plants but this was no guarantee that it will not suffer from blackouts even when there is no calamity.

A supposedly 18-hour power interruption on Wednesday actually ended in a 30-hour blackout that gripped the city and several towns covered by the Dagupan Electric Corp. (Decorp).

The National Transmission Corp. (Transco) earlier announced that it would conduct its annual maintenance of equipment and transmission lines in the Decorp from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Wednesday.

But power was restored only at 11:30 a.m. the following day.

Orlando Sierra, division manager of the Transco labrador substation, said Transco was about to surrender its operations when a fault in some equipment triggered the blackout.

Pangasinan hosts the 1,200-megawatt coal-fired power plant in Sual in western Pangasinan and the 350-megawatt San Roque power plant in San Manuel in eastern Pangasinan.

Eduardo Acosta Fuertes, *PIA Northern Luzon Bureau*

SPIDERMEN
Policewomen crumble's help but look up as workers clean roofs of establishments in Bugsic City following the onslaught of Typhoon "Ignine." The typhoon brought floods and destroyed houses in the city.

German in Boracay slays seeks probe of expert

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—A German national charged with the killing of three foreigners and a Filipino on Boracay Island is asking for an expert to examine specimens of footprints taken from the crime scene.

Jens Sviatl, through his lawyer Edgar Calleo, filed a verbal motion with investigating prosecutor Rhoda Jandusay to allow the expert examination.

"My client is accused of a one-bullet crime and we want to debunk (that the veracity of their (police) evidence," Calleo told the lawyers in a telephone interview.

Calleo made the motion during a preliminary conference on the shootings at the Ruffles provincial prosecutor's office on Wednesday.

Hold departure

Sviatl is facing a complaint of robbery with multiple homicide in the killing of his fellow German Anton Rosenbrander and three others on May 1. Also killed were prosecutor-lawyer Filipino Chito Gaston and three old unidentified foreigners.

The junior department has issued a hold departure order against Sviatl.

The bodies of Rosenbrander, Swiss-born vineyard owner Manfred Schmid, Hong Kong-based architect John James Comperbatsee and Rosenbrander's Filipina maid Irma Encarnacion were found on May 3 in the Rosenbrander's Chevrolet sport utility vehicle (SUV) Vita, which sits on top of Mt. Luho at Sitio Balabag, Barangay Balabag.

The bodies of the victims were found in separate rooms in the mansion with multiple stab wounds. Investigators said robbery was the motive of the gruesome killings.

Sviatl, a mechanic, has been residing on the island since 1999 and helped Rosenbrander in the construction of the mansion. He had helped police identify the victims after the discovery of the bodies.

Specimens

The footprint specimens were presented by police investigators as one of their evidence against Sviatl.

They claimed that his footprints matched a set of blood-caked footprints taken from the basement of the second floor of the mansion where the bodies of three victims were found.

Sviatl has denied involvement in the crime. In his counter-affidavit, he said he was out drinking with friends during the time the crime was believed to have happened.

He also denied a statement of a police witness who said Sviatl fled his Rosenbrander wedding friend on April 30, a day before the crime was believed to have happened. Sviatl said he was in Manila during that day.

Graft rap, disbarment hound Iloilo legislator

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—A 71-year-old village chief here has turned the tables on Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzalez Jr. for slamming for leaving him accused by his political opponents.

"How can he say that when he is the one using his influence and position to strike at those who do not follow his schemes?" said Marcelo Delosia of the Association of Barangay Captains (ABC) in Iloilo City.

Delosia on Tuesday filed a seven-page complaint against Gonzalez in the Office of the Ombudsman in Quezon City for alleged violation of Republic Act 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corruption Practices Act.

Raul said Gonzalez is behind moves to oust her from office because she did not support the candidacy of Gonzalez's son and namesake Raul Jr., for the congressional seat of the lone district of Iloilo City.

The elder Gonzalez earlier described being behind moves to oust Cebreros stating the complaints were filed to dissuade President Macapagal-Arroyo from appointing him as the next justice secretary.

Gonzalez, however, later denied at an ABC presidents' Cebreros said she did not encounter similar problems because she supported the former Iloilo City congressman.

Lawyer Bonifacio Alemajan, Delosia's legal counsel, said the move would also push for Gonzalez's disbarment.

ROUNDUP

Fire hits Cebu slum

CEBU CITY—Two children who were playing with matches had caused the fire that gutted 30 houses of around 100 families in this densely populated area.

Fire Chief Supt. Ferdinand Cuadilla blamed the barangay for the fire, which razed the shanties of informal settlers in Sitio Lahug, Barangay Capitol Site.

Cuadilla said the fire started at around 12:30 p.m. when the children's house caught fire. Within 15 minutes, the fire had spread to the neighboring houses.

Cuadilla said the fire was fanned by strong winds.

Fire Senior Inspector Ramon Ramos said the fire was declared under control at 2:30 p.m.

Ramos said the fire damaged around P100,000 worth of property.

Judge steps car donation

SAN JUAN CITY—A judge here has granted the petition for injunction filed by Mayor Jinggoy Estrada to stop the alleged "midnight donation" of a van from the town to village officials.

Regional Trial Court Judge Antonio Reyes said the petitioner has established a prima facie case to warrant the issuance of a writ of preliminary injunction.

Reyes said the petitioner has established a prima facie case to warrant the issuance of a writ of preliminary injunction.

Judge Reyes declared that the petitioner has established a prima facie case to warrant the issuance of a writ of preliminary injunction.

Reyes said

OOOT SHOP

Baguio's homegrown boots-making industry is feeling the pinch of competition offered by the trade of second hand goods known in the city as ukay-ukay.

Mayor vows to rid city of pushers, drug trade

MANILA CITY—Mayor Lamberto Mercado has warned pushers they would suffer the same fate as those in Davao, where vigilantes have executed drug suspects.

Mercado said he would not hesitate to employ the anti-crime style of Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, if only to rid his 4-year-old city of illegal drugs.

"I would like it dearly to make the city drug free before I lose out (of office) at any [or next] in 2007," Mercado told the Inquirer.

Duterte has become famous for his tough crime-war advocacy and had been linked to the gangland-style executions of crime suspects in the city. He has denied having a hand in the vigilante killings.

Mercado said he would not tolerate vigilante killings.

But "like Duterte," he said, "we would tell those people whom we already identified to stop or to get out of Manila."

Although, he did not disclose when he would do so. Those who would not heed his warning, he said, "they will know."

Mercado said he also told his friends and relatives that they would not receive special treatment from him if they were involved in drugs.

Mercado, in his inaugural speech last month, said his last term would be focused on the anti-drug campaign. "I want to protect the youths from drugs because my city will heal our city."

He suggested to Malacañan that Court for Cities Judge Ramon Alvarez, who administered the Manila oath, to impose the maximum penalty so that those caught engaging in illegal drugs would be killed he'll. **Jaci Arnaiz, PDI Visayas Bureau**

Leave us alone, Quezon mayors tell legislators

LUCENA CITY—The newly elected president of the Quezon Municipal Mayors League has called on the province's first congressional race to muddle with the affairs of the association.

Candidate is Mayor David Suntay made the appeal after he defeated Wenifredo Mayor Bernardo Llanera in a close contested fight for the presidency of the 40-member association of local executives held here on Friday.

"Our congressman should allow us to steer the direction of the league. They should let us remain independent and free from their politicking," Emerlito said.

According to him, the four-lifted Party congressmen—Rafael Nantes (1st District), Princess Alvarez (2nd District), Emelia Suarez (3rd District) and Lorenzo Tolentino III—met with at least 25 mayors in Club Filipino in Metro Manila the day before the league's election to map out plans on how to ensure Llanera victory.

"But despite the maneuvering of our congressmen, I still won the presidency of the league. This only shows that the mayors still want me to lead the group," the Candelaria mayor said.

Emerlito, the provincial chair of Lakas-NUCD, reportedly has the backing of Malacañang. He was the league's president from 1998 to 2001.

Emerlito secured 21 votes compared to Llanera' 17 in a race wrong held in one of the rooms of Queen Margarets Hotel.

He promised to help the members of the association secure national assistance for their local government projects. **Rufus Rodriguez Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau**

RP faces loss of big Iraq contracts

BEYOND Angelo de la Cruz, militant groups like Anakbayan carry on with their anti-US rallies near the US Embassy in Manila. Later, they burned the US flag to express disgust at what they believed was US intervention in the government's handling of the hostage crisis. AGUT MAGKILAT

Transcript p.A2

cess. It's a crisis, an ally, a friend, **helps a partner on his money, and** that's what we are trying to do."

Asked if Washington was disappointed with the Philippine government's decision to pull out its troops from Iraq, Hattendorf said: "I'm not going to use the 'D' word. Referring to Iraq I or speak in specifics let me say that's a decision that should deter shouldn't do."

He added: "In a time of test, enemies determine that you bend. I just ask you. Please don't confuse your enemies with your friends."

Fighting terrorism

In Washington, US state department spokesperson Richard Boucher reiterated his government's disappointment with Manila's decision to pull out its troops.

"We think that withdrawal sends the wrong signal and that it is important for people to stand up to terror and not allow them to change our behavior," he said.

But the US government insist its help in allies fight terrorism appeared to be on track despite the prospect of strained relations between the two countries.

Richardone, along with Rear Adm. Charles Kubic, commander of the US Army Civil Engineers Corps, was in Cagayan to announce new contracts in Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija. He added that Kubic's cost war according on a bridge project in Tawi-Tawi.

"The visit is part of a regular series of meetings between military and security officials of both countries to become more familiar with each country's efforts to combat terrorism," the US Embassy statement said.

Last month, Adm. Thomas Fargo, commander of the US Pacific Command, was in Manila to meet with Philippine military and defense officials. He announced the release of around $16 million to help fund local antiterrorism efforts and to develop **local intelligence.**

Research support

To beg Army deals to Iraq's postwar economic reform, the Philippines had been banking not only on its staunch support for the US-led coalition but also on Filipino expertise in Middle East projects.

But the Pentagon had said that companies from countries that did not support the US-led coalition in Iraq would not be allowed to take part in reconstruction efforts.

The Philippines had been counted as being well-positioned in getting subcontracts from American contractors expected to bag the biggest deals, but with the government's decision to pull out the troops, **deals has been ruined or whether** the Philippines would still be given **priority over other countries whose** support had not wavered despite **threats to their citizens by Iraqi in**surgents.

A member of the presidential task force for the rebuilding of Iraq, who asked not to be identified, said the US government's disappointment over the Philippines' wavering commitment would inevitably impact on the nation's chances of getting contracts.

The task force official said this would be even more likely should President George W. Bush get reelected in the US election in November.

Spare change

Oswald Jon, executive vice president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, agreed that the Philippines' current stance could affect its ability to secure contracts during the rebuilding of Iraq.

"But I'm sure the President has taken all of these into consideration," Jon said.

However, Francis Chua, Jon's counterpart in the Federation of Philippine Chinese Chambers of Commerce, said that even before the hostage crisis, it was uncertain whether the Philippines would get a share of the economic development in Iraq.

"We don't have a contract, and **whatever they have given us a** grave charge," Chua said. "We have always been taken for granted by the United States despite our support of its cause."

Chua expressed confidence that Filipino contractors would still be able to land contracts mainly on merit because of their long experience in working in hostile territories in the Middle East.

In Washington, the US state department indicated that the Philippines' decision to pull its troops out of Iraq to save the life of De la Cruz could affect its ties with the United States.

Unexpected decision

"I think **we'll have to see,"** Boucher told reporters when asked **whether bilateral relations would** be affected by the Philippines' decision, which runs contrary to US policy on terrorism and giving in to terrorist demands.

He said the decision was totally unexpected.

Washington had not to be given "**precise clarification**" on the Philippine government's exact plans in Iraq, but Boucher said "**they've reconfirmed the original** statement that [the troops] would leave as soon as possible."

"I express once again the fact **that we're disappointed in** that statement [to withdraw the troops]," he said.

Boucher said Manila had stood beside the United States "as a friend and an ally on many, many occasions in the decades past, and so we look forward to continuing to work with the Philippines in all the areas where we can productively do that."

He also said he did not expect Manila's move to set a precedent for other countries with troops in Iraq and facing death threats from militants to bail out.

Militants' cruelty

Giving Japan, South Korea and Bulgaria as among the countries that had stood their ground in Iraq despite their citizens facing death threats, he said the resolve of militants in the war on terror had largely been strengthened by the brutality of the militants.

"Steel is in many nations, the reaction has only been to strengthen their resolve, to know even more strongly what they're fighting for and why it's important to fight (it out) that sort of revulsion at the cruelty of terrorism, which goes against all the world's religions," Boucher said. With an AFP report

10 Pinoy drivers safe at RP Embassy in Baghdad

By Marvin P. Mortel

TEN 10 Filipino drivers reportedly stranded in Iraq are now in the Philippine Embassy in Baghdad after being released from the Petroman compound near the Saudi Arabian border where they had been trapped for several days, a labor official said yesterday.

Ambassador Roy Cimatu is now trying to negotiate with the Saudi government to ensure that the 10 would be brought back to Saudi Arabia without their trucks, acting Labor Secretary Manuel Imson said late yesterday.

It was Cimatu who brought the group to Baghdad, aboard 43 kias from the Petroman camp where the drivers had been holed up since their convoy was attacked by Iraqi militants on Tuesday as they attempted to slip back into Saudi Arabia.

Apparently, the group's Saudi employer now insist the 10 drivers be turned to Saudi border with their trucks which would mean having to wire the same route where they were attacked twice.

The first attack on July 4 near the Tuffaiha bridge resulted in the death of two Iraqi security personnel, the wounding of one and the abduction of Angelo dela Cruz, the Filipino who is being hostage and threatened with beheading by the militants.

The second attack occurred on Tuesday afternoon when the convoy of 40 trucks tried to return to Saudi Arabia but was ambushed and forced back into the compound.

Filipino could not say how many in the 40-truck convoy were also target of the terrorists—but Imson said as reported earlier by the labor department—confirmed but he stressed that all the Filipino drivers safe and were able to return to the camp.

"They are safe. They are all in Petromin, Iraq. The site where they have been staying for the past 3 or 4 days since they got into Iraq... Majority of them, including the 10 truck drivers, returned to the Petromin camp after that incident [the Tuesday ambush]," Imson said.

But "Iraq" convoy of 40 trucks now being escorted by members of the Iraqi security force, Imson said last week when they were ambushed on Tuesday.

Imson said he was "certain" that security arrangements are going to be "more intense" and "better" than before.

He added that the Philippine team in Iraq headed by Cimatu was coordinating with Iraqi securing the Saudi employers of the drivers and Philippine embassy officials to ensure the return of the 10 Filipino drivers and their colleagues to Saudi Arabia.

Gov't playing dangerous game, say diplomats

Transcript p.A2

THE BEST prayer is the Mass, so even in the rain relatives and coworkers of Angelo de la Cruz continue their prayerful vigil. BOY TORIO

ribbon' issued the following press release: "The Foreign Affairs Ministry is coordinating the petition of the humanitarian contingent with the Ministry of National Defense. Accordingly our head count is down from 51 to 43."

Albert refused to elaborate.

Did they or didn't they?

The statement left many diplomats and analysts in Manila scratching their heads. Did the government pull out the troops on Wednesday or were they on leave anyway and were not in Iraq?

Last week, the head count of the Philippine contingent was already down by six. Five members of the contingent were on rest and recuperation leave and one was ordered to the liaison office at Camp Doha in Kuwait, the Department of National Defense said Spokesperson Petronio Bantolo said.

Albert's statement pushing the size of the Philippine contingent at 43 followed the supposedly confusing and vague statement by Deputy Foreign Secretary Rafael Seguis on feeble television station Al-Jazeera on Monday.

The response to the demand by the group Khalid Ibn al-Walid, the Philippine government, in line with its commitments, will pull its humanitarian forces out of Iraq as soon as possible in the time it takes to carry out the necessary preparations for their return to the Philippines," Seguis said.

Where?

The statement gave no indication when any troop withdrawal would take place and if it would be ahead of schedule or before the deadline demanded by the kidnappers.

As one diplomat pointed out: "Are they or aren't they pulling their troops out before Aug. 20? How long is as soon as possible ... a few days, a few weeks?"

Another diplomat pointed out: "By delivering vague, ambiguous statements the government is playing a dangerous game. No one knows where it stands."

"Some government appears to be saying they are pulling the contingents out but at the same time he says 'in line with its commitments.'

"Does that mean those troops on vacation will not be going back? And will that be seen as the start of an early withdrawal of sorts? It's anybody's guess right now."

Mixed signals

The diplomat said the mixed signals were not helping the hostage situation nor the Philippine government.

When US ambassador to the Philippines Francis Richardone was asked by AFP about the hostage crisis on Wednesday, he replied, "I don't want to comment on that, but I will ask you please don't confuse your enemies or your friends."

On Tuesday, Richardone called on President Macapagal-Arroyo, who has kept a low profile throughout the crisis.

Unimpressed

It was understood that Richardone had impressed on Ms Arroyo the need not to bow to the demands of the kidnappers and underlined that recent statements by her Cabinet officials were vague.

The US Embassy would not give any details of the meeting, but diplomatic sources say Richardone came away unimpressed with Ms Arroyo's explanations. AFP

GMA has no choice, says Ibon

By Norman Bordadora

[MERCADO] from an election that panel questions on her legitimacy despite her having been proclaimed the winner by Congress, President Macapagal-Arroyo had no choice but to agree to the demand of the Iraqi militants threatening to kill Angelo dela Cruz.

This was the perspective aired yesterday by the think-tank Ibon Foundation Inc. in its mid-year analysis of the Philippine political and economic situation. It said the allegations of fraud in the May 10 elections have not been resolved and continued to affect the stability of the Arroyo administration.

"The President is trying to respond because there is instability," said Ibon research director Antonio Tujan Jr. in a news conference.

"If she had a clear mandate, she would say. The people elected me because they believed in my [economic] agenda and, therefore, I should not face the terrorists anymore." And she would not have made the decision to pull out the troops], "Tujan added.

No clear mandate

Ibon's paper on political instability started off with the failure of the recent elections to stabilize the political situation through a winner with a clear mandate to govern the country.

Thus, Ibon said, the President needed to institute confidence-building measures in order to reach out to the mainstream and political opposition.

Still, Tujan said, Ms Arroyo's response should have been more drastic and more immediate.

"If Angelo de la Cruz is beheaded despite the pullout of the Filipino troops, I would be scared of the President doing more links," he said.

Tujan said Ms Arroyo's Philippine contingent should have been withdrawn from Iraq immediately after the militants served their demand.

"You have a case that really galvanized the nation...," Tujan said. "She has a weak mandate. If she [had] done that, she could have put a confidence-building measure and strengthen her mandate. She should have done the popular thing even if she didn't believe in it."

Pullout pulls up support for GMA

From page A1

Sen. Francis Pangilinan said the United States and other allies should see that "instability and insecurity" in Manila, triggered by protest rallies had prompted Ms Arroyo to make the decision.

Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas said Ms Arroyo should not be hindered by the negative reactions to the announced withdrawal of the Philippine contingent for long.

"The President is seeing it is that the national interest prevails, and not just to please the United States and Australia," Roxas said in Cebuano.

But opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel voiced dismay over the government's "capitulation" to the demands of the Jo'Cot captors, and said swearing the hostage's safe release without withdrawing the troops remained the best option.

The pullout, Pimentel added, sets meant to save the life of De la Cruz as well as protect Ms Arroyo from public wrath that could arise from a mishandling of the hostage crisis.

Weakness

But Dr. Renato de Castro, chair of the De la Salle University's international studies department, said the pullout would not only mar the Philippines' relations with the United States and other allies of the war on terror but also embolden other armed extremists to kidnap more Filipinos.

"The worst backlash we could get is from the terrorists themselves. They now know our weakness, and the fact that they would have the government to its knees," he said.

"Life is precious, of course," De Castro conceded. "But Angelo and his family know the risk involved when he took the job. If we allow the terrorists to get away with it, we will have more Angelo de la Cruzes."

In the reckoning of De Castro, whose expertise includes US foreign policy as well as security and strategic studies, "the best way to deal with terrorists is not to kill them but to deny them success in their political objective of changing the behavior of a state."

He added that aside from the country's "vulnerability" being exposed, the other likely backlash would be the "withdrawal" of economic and military aid from the United States and other countries to whom the Philippines earlier gave its "commitment" to stand up to terrorists. (See story on Page A2.)

Intact ties

But Defun disputed views that the pullout had only succeeded in advancing the cause of the Iraqi militants.

"Whether or not we acted in the way we acted will not prevent the extremists in Iraq to proceed with what they want to do," he told reporters at a press briefing. "They will continue with their ruthlessness and terrorist activities regardless of the decision of the President."

Defun also said he did not foresee a severing of ties between the Philippines and the United States, particularly in the global fight against terrorism.

"There is an setback," he said. "I don't think this single incident should set it back. Measures against terrorism will continue to be undertaken. This single incident should not be the benchmark of our fight against terrorism."

Pangilinan told reporters that the Philippines now faced the challenge of convincing its allies that it remained committed to the war against terror.

"We have to explain our persuasive skills to be able to get the message across that we are still firm in our resolve to fight terrorism, we are still committed, we are still an ally in our desire to address terrorism worldwide. But there are limitations to what we can do," he said.

Pangilinan also said, "When the US and other allies understand that we have a huge overseas worker population who have families who are directly affected by the instability and insecurity in the country ... then they will understand the reasons why ... [are decided] to pull out."

But Pimentel said Ms Arroyo was also protecting herself.

"If De la Cruz is beheaded, there is no question that his death would be blamed... not on his captors, but on the President. His execution would explode into another Ebe Constantopholos situation that could undermine the already shaky presidency of Ms Arroyo," Pimentel said in a statement.

Constantopholos, a domestic worker, was accused of killing the son of the Singaporean employers of fellow domestic worker Delia Maga and the killing of Maga herself. She was executed in 1995 by Singaporean authorities despite pleas by the Philippine government.

Media asked to be patient

Cardinal Vidal appealed to the media to be patient in its role in the news blackout imposed by Malacañang on the hostage crisis.

"Let the media wait and not make a judgment on the inclusion of the government. Let them do their work. After all, many people are very much concerned, both locally and international," Vidal said, adding:

"If we are impatient, it will not serve any purpose at all."

The prelate also said the Catholic Church knew its limitations and did not wish to preempt any plan of the government regarding the crisis.

"We have to respect [the leaders of the government]. Besides, if they are negligent, we will call their attention," he said.

Vidal said he understood the predicament of Filipino workers who had chosen to leave their families to seek overseas for better pay.

"Poverty can force people to hold on to the edge of a knife," he said.

Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri, who was in Baculod yesterday, said Ms Arroyo decided on the troop pullout because it was necessary to her to look after the safety and welfare of the 1.5 million Filipino workers in the Middle East.

He said pulling out the troops was better than sacrificing more lives de la Cruz. Zubiri said the Philippines had the biggest number of citizens in the Middle East. He also noted that the Philippines would not be the first to pull out its troops from Iraq because Spain, Iran and Costa Rica had earlier done so.

Interference

On the other hand, Bukidnon Rep. Cirilyn Beltran said the US government "should stop interfering in the ongoing national debate" over whether Ms Arroyo should order the pullout of troops or not.

Beltran said in a statement that Washington should "keep out of the Philippines' internal affairs, and stop using its influence to pressure Malacañang against calling the troops home."

He said De la Cruz was held hostage by Iraqi insurgents because the Philippine government was an "avowed ally of the US and its global war was directed against Iraq and its people."

"The US is also directly to blame for De La Cruz's abduction and his curious threat to his life," Beltran said.

In a phone interview Wednesday with the reporters in Sta. Cruz, Laguna, "recording period" Robert Reyes said he would conduct a big "one for a cause" in Manila if De la Cruz is executed by his captors.

He said that it would be "the beginning of his end" if the President mishandled the hostage crisis, and that the supposedly growing disenchantment against her would rise to unmanageable proportions.

Flag burning

The United States' expression of dismay at the pullout of Philippine troops from Iraq to save hostage Angelo dela Cruz was met with the burning of an American paper flag by militant youth groups in front of the US Embassy along Roxas Boulevard in Manila.

Protesting the so-called "intervention" in Philippine affairs, around 20 members of the groups Anakbayan and League of Filipino Students marched along Kalaw Avenue in an attempt to hold a protest rally.

Police blocked the groups at the corner of Kalaw and Roxas Boulevard, but no violent dispersal took place.

The protesters held their program along Gilera, concluding with the burning of the paper flag.

Anakbayan secretary general Eleanor de Guzman said both the US and Philippine governments should be held accountable for De la Cruz's plight because the United States instigated the invasion of Iraq and the Philippine government supported it.

The Communist Party of the Philippines also assailed he US government for its criticism of the Philippine government's decision to pull out of Iraq.

Principal terrorists

"In the first place, the principal terrorists in Iraq are the US invasion and occupation forces who have been massacring, torturing and abusing tens of thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians, bombing Iraqi establishments and homes, destroying essential infrastructure and holding hostage the entire Iraqi country and people to US international terrorism, superpower hegemony and plunder," CPP spokesperson Gregorio Rosal said in a statement.

Rosal also said, "Stop turning the truth upside down. US imperialism is the real terrorist in Iraq." Reports from Bernadette A. Parco and Carlo P. Cornes, PDI Visayas Bureau; Vell Cenmora, Carlito Pablo, Norman Bordadora and Leila B. Salaverria in Manila; Brenda G. Pilotin, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Anthony C. Alfiler, PDI Mindanao Bureau

DOJ wages war . . .

From page A1

of cell phones in all schools and universities during class hours.

On Tuesday, acting Justice Secretary Merceditas Gutierrez met with officials of the Ateneo de Manila University, De La Salle University, University of the East, Far Eastern University, University of the Visayas, Adamson University, Xavier School and La Salle-Greenhills.

"They promised to help [the government] curb spam leaving on their campuses," Gutierrez said yesterday in a press conference. "That problem is getting serious. It must be stopped. It is so easy for students to place bets with their cellphones."

The DOJ offered the PEP to persons who could give material information about the syndicates. "Our children should be protected from these people who take advantage of their vulnerability," Gutierrez said.

Jaworski-Yap incident

A basketball wager on text messaging led reportedly triggered the recent shooting incident involving 14-year-old Angelo Heon Yap of Xavier School in San Juan, and 39-year-old Ryan Joseph Jaworski.

Student suicide

Gutierrez said she had Bicutan received "alarming" information that one student had been driven to suicide, and that another stopped schooling after losing P100,000. Just as alarming, she added, were reports that in many cases, the bookies were students themselves.

She said the government was also pursuing leads that point to certain banks as financiers for the gambling syndicates.

President Macapagal-Arroyo herself called national attention to gambling in schools after the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism reported that sports betting—specifically on results of games in the United States' National Basketball Association league—had caught on like wildfire to many private and public institutions.

Bet on score 'endings'

The PCIJ report said students had become increasingly addicted, so that they also placed bets on score "endings" for local basketball games, or even games in their own school leagues.

Under the proposed ban, Gutierrez explained, students would depart their classes with a counsellor upon arriving in school and receive these before going home. She said many high schools had already banned the use of mobile phones from 7:30 a.m. up to when they closed at 3:30 p.m.

Also present in Tuesday's meeting were NBI Assistant Regional Director Mac Bangpuhan, Special Investigator Allan Castando and Witness Protection Program (WPP) head Mark Jalandoni.

NBI special mission

She said she ordered NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco to create a team whose sole mission would be to investigate, bust down, and arrest syndicate members. She told the school officials that bettors faced 20 to 90 days in prison, while bookies would be imprisoned for six to eight years.

The government was prepared to take a "multidisciplinary approach" to the problem, which would involve psychologists, educators, parents and the multigenus community, Gutierrez said.

NBI hotline

For concerned citizens with relevant information, she gave the NBI hotline: 524.1111.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

FRIDAY, JULY 16, 2004

SUERTRES 1 7 7
SIX DIGIT 8 1 5 5 3 6
SUPERLOTTO 6/49 1 15 25 27 34 44
EZ2 7 6

METRO

E-mail: [illegible]

Desk Editors Conrad B. Dilla, Error G. Ojeyagbe

Confusion mars ticket scheme

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A TRIAL run of the new traffic ticket system in effect yesterday in Makati City and Manila drew confusion and criticism from motorists and traffic enforcers as well.

Under the new system, erring drivers are given 48 hours to settle their violations at the Metropolitan Trial Court in Makati instead of being required to post bail at the scene of the violation.

But Makati Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios admitted that the Metropolitan Traffic Tickets Adjudication System (MTTAS) was not fully implemented yesterday as the Manila City Hall had yet to install its computer system.

De Dios said the Manila government was supposed to have installed the computer system by Wednesday but it failed to do so.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienda Jr. has ordered the Manila Traffic and Parking Bureau to implement the MTTAS in the city starting today.

De Dios said the Makati government was ready to implement the system yesterday.

Under the MTTAS, motorists who violate traffic rules will be issued tickets by traffic enforcers and will be required to settle their violations at the Metropolitan Trial Court in Makati instead of being required to post bail at the scene of the violation.

But

Bilibid prisons up for reforms

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE NEW Bilibid Prisons will soon undergo reformation and rehabilitation through a team effort that has been invented to update laws and policies governing the prison system.

Bureau of Corrections Director Romulo Santiago said the policies the new office would draw up would be patterned after successful facilities of more developed countries.

Santiago said former NBP Chief Penal Supt. Wenamin Tesoro, who was removed from his post last week, would head the new office.

"With Tesoro's ardent and intellectual capacity, he is most qualified for the position," Santiago said.

Reformation

The special research team would spearhead the movement for reformation and rehabilitation at the NBP.

Among the team's goals would be to lobby for the improvement of living conditions for prison guards, hiring of additional personnel and modernization of the prison spaces, Santiago said.

He added that the team would also focus on the effective implementation of the NBP's rehabilitation programs, including education and sports, for the inmates.

About time

Santiago denied that Tesoro was ousted as NBP superintendent after they threatened former Misamis Occidental voters major Boy Yap's falsified documents that allowed him to go home last elections.

The was placed in a disciplinary cell last week after NBP officials confirmed that the Supreme Court did not issue a resolution permitting the mayor to vote in his hometown.

"Tesoro has been NBP superintendent for three times," Santiago said. "It's about time that he move on to other endeavors and give way to other younger officials to run its end."

4 suspects in UP student's death charged

FOUR men who were accused for the death of University of the Philippines nursing student Jim Ilario Cubil have been charged in court.

Cubil's family filed charges of robbery with homicide against the suspects after an FX taxi driver who had seen the incident tailed the suspects and tipped their locations to police.

Charged were Amado Abbiru, 25, Michael Llamera, 22, Ireneo Malubay, 35, and William Soriano, 23, alleged members of Sigit Bro Gang, known to rob FX taxis and jeepneys.

Their case, filed at the Manila City Prosecutor's Office, has been forwarded to the office of the inquest prosecutor.

The suspects have been detained at the Western Police District headquarters since their arrest last Monday as an appendix on Rizal Drive, Bgy. Cruz, Manila.

Cubil, 20, was on his way home to Las Piñas City on June 24 when the suspects allegedly robbed him on the FX taxi plied Taft Avenue. Ilario succumbed

Garbage row worsens between Navotas, Obando

By Edson Castro Tandoc Jr.

THE BATTLE continues.

While Navotas Mayor Toby Tanguo is sounding by his unwelcomed garbage disposal facility project in his mayor Tanza, local officials in Obando, Bulacan are picking through with their fight against the dump that they say is a health hazard, among other things.

Obando councilor Gerald Gomez said they would collect evidence and conduct tests to prove the ill-effects of the facility on their residents.

No to barges

He said they would also implement a resolution prohibiting barges carrying garbage from passing through the river between Navotas and Obando.

Tanguo had said he confers the local government had no authority to stop these barges from passing through.

Added Tanguo, "If our dump is a health hazard, what disposal system are they using in Obando? I wish we would see that as an example."

Tailoring the facility's prime operator and some barangay in Obando threw their teeth to open dumps. Control and called they had in Obando serve "landfills" for every barangay.

CONTROVERSIAL site (above) is hurt ecological and health hazard, say affected residents. At left, dump trucks unload their trash.

Former fishpond

The Navotas facility was once a fishpond and the local government decided to convert it into a 30-hectare garbage facility in 2001.

About 700 metric tons of garbage from Navotas and Manila is dumped on the facility every day. The garbage is brought from Pier 18 in Barangay Tanza by barges passing through the river.

Not perfect

"We are not saying the Navotas dump is perfect. But compared to open dumps, this is far better," Philippine Ecology Systems Corp. assistant vice president Chito Nantes told the Bulacan yesterday.

Unlike open dumps, the Navotas facility follows the process of a landfill, with garbage cured by a soil layer and sprayed with organic enzymes to minimize the stench.

Unbearable stench

But Nantes admitted the stench was unbearable, especially when the winds are strong.

Obando residents also blame the facility for their dying fresh food, since only a few fish pens remain because of the passing barges.

Yesterday, community leaders in Obando, together with Bantalahaya, a fisherman's group, organized the Navotas-Obando People's Alliance that is urging the closure of the dump.

United Auctioneers, Inc.
TRUCKS, VANS & HEAVY EQUIPMENT
INSPECTION & REGISTRATION START ON SUNDAY!!!
JULY 22, 23, & 24, 2004
Sale starts at 8:30 AM SHARP!
Catch the Best At
SUBIC BAY
(SUNDAY TO WEDNESDAY)
(SUNDAY TO SATURDAY)
ALSO AVAILABLE: LOCALLY ACQUIRED VEHICLE
LOCATION MAP
SUBIC
TEL NOS: (047) 252-1128 252-1155 to 58
FAX NO: (047) 252-3988
MANILA TEL NOS: (02) 519-0868

St. Camillus Polyclinic
Pasig City
St. Camillus Polyclinic
Color 2D-Echo Imaging

IN SINK ERATOR
CLEAN & EASY
GILLEST HOLDINGS, INC.

FRIDAY, JULY 16, 2004 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BUSINESS

Editor Raul D. Pangalangan
Assistant Editor Carrie S. Martinez

OFW remittances down 7.35% in May

Strict Saudi measures on money laundering take their toll on dollar earnings

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DOLLAR remittances of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) dropped by 7.35 percent to only $695 million in May due to a weaker peso during the month and stricter implementation of anti-money laundering measures in Saudi Arabia, where most OFWs are based.

The May figure brought the country's dollar earnings from OFW remittances to $3.074 billion in the January to May period, which represented a 7.33-percent drop from the figure recorded during the first five months of 2003.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (central bank) blamed the reduction in May for the drop in the amount of OFW remittances. The BSP explained that the weaker peso during the month led to the decline in the dollar equivalent of the remittances.

"The weakened value of OFWs and their beneficiaries in spending the remittance of the May national exercise was also contributory," the BSP said in a statement.

The BSP also has monitored the drop in OFW remittances to the strict and various procedures Saudi Arabian banks are now now implementing before allowing OFWs to send money to their families.

Saleem bank requirements have forced some OFWs to remit money through informal remittance centers, which are not covered by official statistics, the BSP said.

The central bank added that the ongoing crisis in the Middle East discouraged some OFWs to go out of their workplaces to send money.

Despite the decline, the BSP said it is still confident of meeting the full-year target of a 4-percent growth in OFW remittances. The BSP said the projection is based on the expected increase in the number of Filipinos working abroad and the rise in income of existing OFWs.

The BSP noted that total deployment of Filipinos for work abroad went up by 11.3 percent in the first five months of the year. The growth was the highest since 1998.

The BSP also said that the country may expect to earn more from OFW remittances in the second half of the year as the number of fund transfers in Hong Kong, the United States and Italy is expected to go up.

Rhea Tamiza, the BSP said, would compensate for the decline in the first five months of the year.

Major sources of OFW remittances include Japan, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Italy and Hong Kong.

Palace urged to raise import duties

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue is urging Malacañang to issue an executive order that will immediately raise import duties.

According to BIR officials, they alone cannot accomplish the herculean task of generating enough revenue to meet the government's revenue/budget problem.

BIR Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. said that, while Congress is still in recess, it would be the right time for Malacañang to come up executive order.

Parayno said that the President is allowed by law to implement legislative measures even without Congress' approval.

Issuing an EO will take much less time than having Congress approve a measure, he added.

"Even if the BIR is 100-percent efficient, we still cannot meet all the requirements needed to address the budget deficit ... there has to be other stop-gap measures," Parayno separately told reporters after the launch of the Automated Excise Data Management System (AEDMS).

The BIR has adopted the system to plug excise tax leakages.

Parayno said that, considering the record of the government's fiscal problems, efforts of the BIR to enhance tax collection has to be supported by other revenue-enhancement measures.

The BIR, which has slightly missed its collection target for the first half, accounts for over 80 percent of government's total revenue.

Being the biggest revenue contributor, it is hard pressed to help government solve the budget deficit, which last year stood at P199.8 billion. Government hopes to reduce the deficit to P197.8 billion this year.

The BIR chief said Malacañang could do what former President Corazon Aquino did in 1991, when she issued an EO that increased import levy and helped address the government's budget problem.

The Bureau of Customs also recently increased its collections to P62 billion by 1994 from only P45 billion the previous year as a result of the EO, said Parayno.

Deputy Commissioner Alex Buenaventura, who yesterday was formally designated BIR head of the Large Taxpayers Service unit replacing Emilio Aguirre, said that government now needs a stop-gap measure after it decided to absorb the P288-billion debt of the National Power Corp.

The absorption of the PSALM's loss only means that the government will have to increase revenue collection to at least P50 billion per year if it hopes to achieve its goal of wiping out the deficit by 2009.

Parayno said that the government would be better assured of hitting its revenue targets if it would implement a stop-gap measure, rather than simply wait for Congress to move.

The government's economic team has lined up several legislative tax measures intended to address the budget deficit. Included in the measures are the EO increase in excise tax on petroleum, imposition of franchise tax on telecommunications firms, shift of the basis of excise tax from ad to specific, and indexation of excise tax on alcohol and cigarettes to inflation, among others. Michelle V. Remo

MWSS may wind up paying water firm ₱4.5B

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE METROPOLITAN Waterworks and Sewerage System may wind up paying some P4.5 billion to the Benpres Holdings Corp. of Lopez for abandoning the agreement the government regulatory body signed with the water concessionaire's shutdown. This is March, according to confirmations.

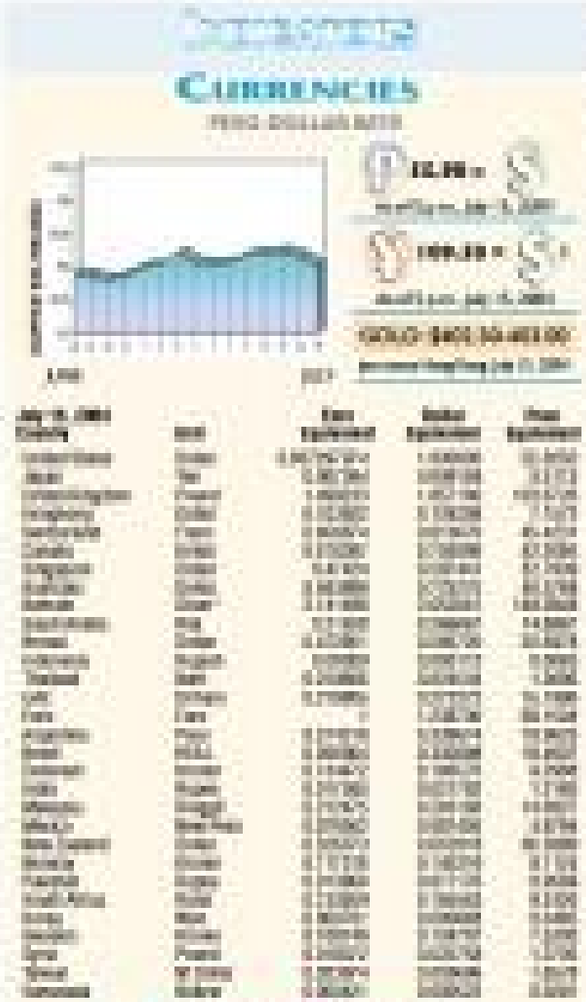
Officials of the Department of Finance, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the MWSS have come up with this estimate after studying the controversial agreement, Amendment No. 3.

They said that when the MWSS decided sometime last week to scrap its agreement with the Maynilad Water Services Inc., the Lopez-led concessionaire firm could demand payment of P4.5 billion.

"We have to make sure that ... there would be no payments to the Lopez and we could maximize the use of the whole P30+ billion," according to an MWSS official, who was referring to the performance bond Maynilad had posted before it began operating the water zone concession.

The National Economic and Development Authority earlier recommended the termination of the agreement between the MWSS and Maynilad. The MWSS is now formulating a new takeover plan for the west concession area.

According to sources privy to the negotiations, officials of the DBM-Department and Bangko Sentral are now drawing up a plan to prevent the disruption of water services in the disputed zone and allow the government to draw from the P30+ million performance bond.



3-liter wonder, 2-liter price

NISSAN, in a bid to improve its market share, is continuing with its price-boosting tactics with the cheaper launch today of a three-liter variant, but with a non-3-liter price tag, of its best-selling flagship, Cefiro.

The new subunit is priced at P1.81 million each, just P20,000 more than the current 2-liter Cefiro throughput but packing more horsepower and other power attributes that is considered in the E6000 G and T series, not to mention a stronger engine.

The 3-liter Cefiro hopes to leave the competition in the dust, since all the rest of the Japanese "luxury" model cars, save the Toyota Camry, are still equipped with 2-liter power plants.

The Camry's 2.4-liter offering already costs P1.43 million. Honda's two-liter Accord is selling for P1.26 million.

Mazda's newly introduced "6" sells at P1.34 million and Mitsubishi's runaway Galant, at P1.393 million.

Despite the higher horsepower, Nissan says its new three-liter Cefiro's fuel consumption is, because of improved efficiency, not much more than a two-liter's. In absolute terms, it should eat a liter of gasoline for every seven kilometers of city driving, and 13.11 kilometers of highway cruising.

But Nissan's lead in the three-liter market may be short-lived, since Toyota is already set to unveil a three-liter version of the Camry on Monday.

Toyota was still retaining the retail price for the bigger Camry as of yesterday afternoon.

Wiggle room

THE SUPREME COURT hearing Wednesday against the "vicious writing" attacks of its ousted Publisher, tribune Buenaventura columnist Ardita Manuel intensified as Maximo S Indiven, did not push through, allegedly for lack of quorum.

But publisher John Marcuant, the chair of the Philippine Press Institute, publicly admitted he did not want to tangle with Indiven, explaining that he does not have the authority and the desire even to attempt to impose discipline on his colleagues despite the assessment in Code of Ethics mandate.

(We agree with Manuant, that the PPI and Code of Ethics, and thereby altogether all the premises about industry standards most publishers doubting as columnists do not want in practice what they themselves preach.)

Manuant even called Cockstales a "liar" for reporting about Manuant ordering the interrogation, which is wrong, since the Supreme itself, not to mention Buenaventurold, has a copy of the PPI press council's invitation for the hearing.

Manuant explained that the PPI, where he is also president, passed on the unenviable task to a committee "under PPI wings."

The investigation was prompted by a memo filed by Presidential Adviser Palmero B. Bermido, after Favorite Publisher's management denied his offer to buy advertising space on his letter to the editor rebutting points he point the year long tirade of favorite Publisher and/or his surrogate columnist could be published.

Cold comfort for Murdoch

THE SUPREME Court has upheld the Antonio Murdoch III branch of the prominent Murdoch family in their takeover of the disputed Manila Backlords in Cadiz City.

In a recent decision, the high tribunal ruled that the backlords president, Ma. Antonia M. Sobremonte, had been settled in the 1997 takeover, along with executive vice president Ramon Mendoza, who has since died.

But the Supreme court ordered Llorente court to continue the hearings on the claim of the Ramon Mendoz heirs for the return of his 30% fighting stocks seized during the takeover.

Heard through the grapevine

THE UBB continues to ride on the upside of the hostile takeover attempt on Equitable PCIBank, quietly buying from April to last month more than 2.3 million EPCIB shares from the market.

The government pension finally stake in the disputed bank has risen to 11.82 percent. The Social Security System has 10.8 percent, for a combined 37.62 percent stake.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

SMART engineer Cynthia Capacchi (left) shows off the telecom equipment during the inauguration of the Smart Wireless Laboratory at the National Development Corp. campus of the PLP in Sta. Mesa, Manila.

Smart sweeps campuses across the country

By Clarissa S. Bustos

FOR THE country's largest wireless phone company, sharing technology and resources to enhance education is a smart way to give back some of its gains to the community where most and more of their subscribers are coming from.

Smart Communications Inc. is rolling out its Smart Wireless Engineering Education Program, or Sweep, in universities nationwide. Twenty-two colleges offering electronics, communications engineering and IT courses in different parts of the country are now benefiting from Sweep.

"Here, more universities, according to Smart's Ramon Isberto, are set to be included in the program in the coming months.

"We are finding out that there are a lot of good schools in the country not just in Metro Manila," said Isberto, head of the Smart's public affairs. "The thing is, especially for state universities, they are hardly ever funded. In our own way, we hope to help with our technology and the expertise of our people."

Smart intends to cover as many schools as it can, with the goal of improving not only technology and resources, particularly the people, who all have a strong sense of charity and volunteerism work.

Community-based

"Smart also pushes helping communities rather than individuals," Isberto said. "We hope to promote entrepreneurship in the areas we go to."

The first step of the two-pronged program involves the setting up of a wireless laboratory to serve as a teaching facility for engineering students.

The communications system donated to Sweep schools consists of six radio stations, an SBS cabinet, an RBS unit, two satellite units, a harmony hawk, a set of telecommuting software, three paired antennas, RF cables and connectors. The package comes with the wireless analog, CDMA and GSM systems.

Except for the five GSM sets, which remains a property of Smart, all other tools and equipment are turned over to the Sweep school.

Smart engineers oversee the GSM with help from students in the university where it is set up.

The idea is to provide some of the country's engineering students the opportunity that its own engineers never had—the chance to see and work with the actual equipment, Isberto said.

Real thing

Smart engineers said that during their time, they would only imagine how the equipment looked like. Isberto believed that with Smart's ongoing train station in colleges, advance supply of latest equipped engineers possible, made available to the telecom industry in general, and to the company, in particular for its future needs.

Once the wireless lab is in place, Smart engineers will then begin conducting a series of seminars.

The modules consist of the basic introduction to performance of Sweep colleges on how to use the communications system, plus lectures for students on the GSM technology, the telecommunications evolution and the development of wireless communications.

"We found out that our engineers are less-

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

SO THE PUBLIC MAY KNOW:

DWIGHTSTEEL BUILDING SYSTEMS, INC., ("DWIGHTSTEEL") A CORPORATION ENGAGED IN ROLL-FORMING AND MANUFACTURING OF ROOFING MATERIALS IN THE PHILIPPINES HAS BEEN UNJUSTIFIABLY SUED BY ITS COMPETITOR, PHILMETAL PRODUCTS, INC., (PHILMETAL) ON THE WRONG AND FALSE CLAIM THAT IT IS INFRINGING PHILMETAL'S CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS.

RECENTLY, IDENTICAL PUBLISHED ARTICLES APPEARED IN MAJOR NEWSPAPERS, CITING THE SEIZURE IN DWIGHTSTEEL'S PREMISES OF ALLEGED SUSPECTED FAKE CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS BY THE POLICE.

DWIGHTSTEEL WANTS THE PUBLIC TO KNOW THAT THIS IS ABSOLUTELY FALSE. THE RAPID GROWTH OF THE BUSINESS OF DWIGHTSTEEL OVER THE YEARS, BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE VERY HIGH QUALITY OF ITS PRODUCTS, PARTICULARLY ITS ROOFING SHEETS AND STRUCTURAL STEEL DECK HAS GAINED FOR DWIGHTSTEEL EXCELLENT REPUTATION AND GOODWILL IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY.

BECAUSE PHILMETAL FEELS GRAVELY THREATENED AND IS LOSING MARKET SHARE TO DWIGHTSTEEL, IT HAS RESORTED TO TAKING UNWARRANTED AND BASELESS ACTIONS AGAINST DWIGHTSTEEL INSTEAD OF COMPETING FAIRLY UNDER A SYSTEM OF FREE ENTERPRISE.

TO COUNTER THESE UNDESIRABLE TACTICS OF PHILMETAL, DWIGHTSTEEL IS TAKING ALL NECESSARY STEPS TO PRESERVE ITS RIGHTS AND STOP PHILMETAL'S CONTINUING ACTS OF HARASSMENT AGAINST IT.

DESPITE THE HARRASMENT OF PHILMETAL, DWIGHTSTEEL'S OPERATIONS CONTINUE UNINTERRUPTED AND IT ASSURES ITS CUSTOMERS THAT IT IS ABLE TO FULLY AND TIMELY EXTEND ITS SERVICES AND COMPLY WITH ALL ITS COMMITMENTS.

DWIGHTSTEEL IS SENDING THIS CLEAR MESSAGE TO PHILMETAL AND/OR MR. ARETO UY, CHAIRMAN OF PHILMETAL, THAT IT WILL NOT TAKE MATTERS SITTING DOWN BUT RESOLUTELY FIGHT ITS LEGAL BATTLES FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE INTEGRITY OF ITS BUSINESS AND THE PROTECTION OF ITS DISTINCT PRODUCTS.

DWIGHTSTEEL ALSO EXTENDS A STERN WARNING THAT IT WILL NOT HESITATE TO PROSECUTE TO THE FULL EXTENT OF THE LAW ANY OTHER PERSON OR COMPETITOR WHO IRREGULARLY TAKES ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION BY UNDULY SPREADING FABRICATED, ERRONEOUS AND DISPARAGING INFORMATION ABOUT ITS BUSINESS AFFAIRS, ITS PEOPLE AND ITS PRODUCTS.

DWIGHTSTEEL BUILDING SYSTEMS, INC.

MWSS may wind up . . .

According to the MWSS source, the new reorganization plan would smoothen the exit of Respicio Holdings—the majority shareholder of Maynilad.

Maynilad officials are now promoting the restructuring of the agreement.

"We believe that Amendment No. 2, having been approved by the DOB, cannot simply be set aside," reiterated by MWSS, said Angel S. Ong, Respicio Holdings president and chief operating officer. "Such action would only give rise to further disputes between the parties, which Amendment No. 1 had sought to prevent."

Respicio said if the MWSS would insist on the unilateral withdrawal of the renegotiation agreement, then that would leave them with the original rehabilitation plan filed in November 2003.

The first rehabilitation plan, which Maynilad proposed, recommended that no payments be made on its creditors in the next seven years.

"Management and control of Maynilad, therefore, will remain with Respicio. We reserve all rights and remedies against MWSS for reneging on its undertakings," Ong said.

Earn as high as 3.5%!

PSBank

US Dollar Time Deposit Rates*

	$1,000-9,999	$10,000-49,999	$50,000 & up
1 Month	2.500%	2.750%	3.000%
2 Months	2.750%	3.000%	3.250%
3 Months	3.000%	3.250%	3.500%
6 Months	3.250%	3.250%	3.500%
12 Months	3.250%	3.500%	3.500%

Visit any of our 121 PSBank Branches nationwide.

KARL EDWARD INTERNATIONAL, INC.

JULY 17 & 18, 2004
9:00 A.M.-7:00 P.M.
SATURDAY & SUNDAY

"The best bazaar for every occasion"

NBC
The NBC Tent
Bonifacio Global City, Taguig

Inquiries call: 3728453/ 3342540 / 334-3726

BMW Four Plus.
The service you expect at the price you might not.

At four years old, your BMW deserves the same high quality care it had when it was new. BMW Four Plus* is a program especially designed for BMWs four years and older – incorporating servicing, Original BMW Parts and repairs by our BMW-approved technicians. All at prices lower than you might expect.

*For vehicles models sold by authorized BMW dealers in the Philippines from 1994. A participating BMW owners only. Accident repair work is not included in the program.

Authorized BMW Dealers:
Premier Cars (BMW) Pampanga • CGC Building, City of San Fernando, Pampanga • Tel. (045) 963 7777 • Fax (045) 963 3355 • Autohaus (BMW) 104 E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave., Ugong, Quezon City • Tel. (02) 638 0734 • Fax (02) 638 3413 • Prestige Cars (BMW) Makati 2324 Pasong Tamo Ext., Makati City • Tel. (02) 892 8727-28 • Fax (02) 816 7225 • PGA Cars (BMW) 2161 CDSA, Mandaluyong City • Tel. (02) 727 0381 • Fax (02) 727 0390 • Performance Auto (BMW) Magallanes St. corner Fr Borgoa St., Cebu City • Tel. (032) 254 3481 • Fax (032) 256 3482

GSIS threatening to withdraw ₱166-M investment in PSE

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

STATE pension fund Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) has reportedly threatened to pull out its investments in the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE).

Insurance sources said this was triggered by the PSE shareholders' strong objection to the entry of private investors into the exchange and disagreement among members of its board.

The source said the problem was further compounded by disagreements between PSE chair Alicia Arroyo and GSIS general manager Winston Garcia over the process of ordering the new boards president who replaced former PSE head Cayetano Paderanga.

The GSIS holds a 12.5-percent stake in the PSE, equivalent to 1.4 million shares worth about ₱166 million.

Sources said the GSIS was poised to retain these shares in the bourse.

Garcia declined to comment when asked by the Inquirer about the issue while the PSE chair could not be reached as of press time despite repeated calls.

A group of stockbrokers earlier asked the court to stop the PSE from completing the sale of its shares through private placement.

Stockbrokers Ismael Cruz, Filomeno Francisco and Edgardo Gonzalez said they had opposed the sale of the 40-percent stake in the PSE to private institutions for a number of reasons.

The sale of primary and secondary shares to the GSIS, PCIB Beneficial Trust Fund, San Miguel Retirement Fund, Elar Inq Investment Ltd., ICI Strategic Pte. Ltd., A. Soriano Corp. and Equitica Securities raised for the PSE ₱722 million.

About 88 stockbrokers said in a manifesto that the private placement was "controversial in undue haste" and that the process lacked transparency. They also said that the transaction price of ₱139.50 per share "was extremely low and grossly disadvantageous to the PSE and its stockholders."

The stockholders, in the same manifesto, added that at the time the transaction was announced, the price of PSE shares ranged from ₱195 to ₱200 per share. Further, the transaction price represented a "small premium" over the PSE's book value of ₱185 per share. They claimed that the transaction was "unconscionable" after the PSE declared a cash payout of ₱16 per share out of the accumulated earnings raised from the subscription of new shares.

The deal also allegedly violated the preemptive rights of existing stockholders accordingly under the Corporation Code, the 9-percent ownership cap in the PSE held by eligible investors and the listing rules against the issuance of additional shares within six months from listing. The PSE was listed last Dec. 13.

Piltel eyes bigger share in Talk 'N Text earnings

By Clarissa S. Batino

PILIPINO Telephone Corp. will likely end up getting 80–85 percent of its net cellular revenue since a new sharing agreement with Smart Communications Inc. is completed, according to a ranking Smart official.

At present, Smart gets half of Piltel's revenue from Talk 'N Text for allowing the latter access to its network. Last year, Piltel's cellular phone revenue reached about ₱9 billion.

An 80-percent to 85-percent share in Talk 'N Text revenue will allow Piltel to take advantage of the billions of pesos in tax breaks that are maturing this year.

According to Smart president Napoleon Nazareno, the revenue-sharing agreement between the two wireless subsidiaries of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. has yet to be finalized.

"Offhand, that (80–85) revenue sharing sounds too much in favor of (Piltel)," said Nazareno in an interview.

But another Smart official said that based on ongoing discussions, an 80–85 revenue sharing agreement in favor of Piltel was realistic. The new revenue deal will be cut within the next few weeks.

Speculations on Piltel's potential have been pushing the price of its share price in recent weeks, although profit-taking dragged it down yesterday by 34 centavos to ₱2.34 from ₱2.36 on Wednesday. The price of Piltel surged to a low of 26 centavos several years ago when the company's ₱963-billion debt was backed.

This year, Piltel's share price surged by more than 115 percent. Smart bought a 47-percent stake in Piltel from PLDT for only 20.5¢ centavos per share.

Analysts said that given Piltel's strong potential, its share price could reach between ₱2.30 and ₱3 this year, especially once allowable revenue-sharing agreement is reached.

PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan said Piltel would likely record its projected income of ₱400 million this year.

Piltel has about ₱13.1 billion in net operating loss carryovers or Nolic benefits incurred in 2003 and 2003 that should lead to tax savings of ₱4.3 billion in the year and next.

Piltel's Nolco worth ₱13.17 billion booked in 2003 will expire this year and another ₱3.14 billion of the tax break for 2003 will lapse next year.

Under the government's policy, a company is allowed to deduct the Nolco from gross earnings.

ORACLE
Specialization
Get Trained by an Oracle Certified Professional
APTECH

Smart sweeps ...

(Story begins on B1)

tomed workers," Ibarra said. "So they are eager to be part of what we call the Gawad Edukalidad program."

Smart engineers are tapped to head the seminars in schools where they had graduated.

"We hear anecdotes about some of the guys approaching their teachers and telling them—Sir, also ha yung binagay nyo dun," said Ursula Pineda, Smart's project manager for community programs. "It was a fun up interview."

Years of teachers

Smart's network services division has developed a group of engineers who can teach. The company has fielded teams nationwide to address the requirement of Smart schools.

"Studying the trivia so is important, especially as the number of Smart colleges is increasing.

Smart schools in Metro Manila include Adamson University, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Instituto de Manila, Technological University of the Philippines and Pateros University.

Other state universities are now being considered for the Smart program.

And because Smart's community program go hand in hand with entrepreneurship, Ibarra said Smart had also formulated other services to some of the Smart schools.

For instance, Smart has bought in a text called SMS save that would allow a university to organize its database and manage traffic.

"We are looking into [some services to help manage the school, and we share the revenues," Ibarra said.

No dole-outs

Community development, according to Ibarra, should not promote dole-outs.

"Dole-outs are not sustainable because what you give the less is not going to improve. Ibarra said. "What we hope to achieve with our community programs is sustainability."

Of course, Smart has other interests programs that are purely charity work. But even then, the company would always balance donations with education and entrepreneurship, said Ibarra.

HR BAZAAR
"A One Stop Shop for your HR Needs"
July 28, 2004 (10 am - 7 pm)
Glorietta 4 Sunken Area,
Ayala Makati City
Come, join and invite friends to the PMAP HR Bazaar for: free consultations with HR Professionals, experts and representatives from government agencies (BIR, DOLE, NLRC, SSS, Pag-ibig, Philhealth) of your company's HR concerns and, a showcase of HR related services.
training materials & books
manpower providers
financial institutions
health care services
IT hardware and software providers
courier services
office supplies
furniture and equipment
and many more
The HR Bazaar is a fund-raising project of the PMAP Ways & Means Committee for the Asian Center for Advance Studies in Business & Human Resource Management which purpose is to provide continuing education to upgrade the caliber of the HR Practitioner as a Strategic Business Partner in the organization.
PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES
JOB Market

Smart picks underwriters

SMART Communications Inc. has tapped five foreign lenders to underwrite a $184-million, 5-year loan for the expansion of its network.

Mandated to arrange the borrowing were ABN Amro Bahring PC, BNP Paribas, Calyon, DBS Group Holdings Ltd. and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp.

Smart president Napoleon Nazareno said the interest rate was favorable. He, however, refused to disclose the terms of the loan.

"We expect to draw on the facility later this year, maybe by November or December. The only thing we can say about the rate is this point is that it is quite favorable," said Mon Ribarlo, head of Smart's public affairs department.

A $184-million, 5-year loan of Smart in 2002 carried a spread of one percentage point over the London Interbank Offered Rate or Libor. Three-month Libor was at 1.45 percent.

"I don't have the terms yet but we are working with a syndicate of foreign banks. It should be completed this month. I heard the interest rate is very low," said Nazareno earlier.

Also to fund the proceeds of the loan should handroll the expansion of Smart's GSM coverage.

GSM is the digital mobile system used by the country's three wireless carriers including Smart.

Smart is the country's largest mobile phone company with more than 16 million subscribers by the end of the first half.

The company registered ₱5.1 billion in net income in the first quarter. Last year, it was the country's most profitable company with ₱36.1 billion in net earnings. Smart is likely to surpass the 2003 profit level.

DISCLOSURES

PHILCOMSAT Holdings Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Aug. 19 with record date on Aug. 3.

* * *

WATERFRONT PHILIPPINES Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Sept. 3 with record date on Aug. 13. The company's lender offer to minority shareholders of Acesite (Philippines) Hotel Corp. will start on July 19 until Aug. 18, 2004 at ₱1.94 per Acesite common share.

* * *

ALLIANCE Global Group Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Sept. 15, 8 a.m. at the Shangri-la Hotel, Pasig City. Only shareholders of record as of June 30 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

PCI Leasing and Finance Inc. bought 120,000 of its own shares at ₱1.20 each.

* * *

JOLLIBEE Holdings Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Aug. 4, 2 p.m. at the company's conference room, Tatalon Place Condominium, Pasig City. Only stockholders of record as of July 7 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

LORENZO Shipping Corp. disclosed the purchase of 130,000 of the company's shares by one of its directors, Ramon Garcia. *Compiled by Marvee D. Tolosa, PID Intern*

Definitions determining decisions

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

LAST WEEK, columnist Antonio C. Abaya speculated whether the Arroyo administration could attain its goal of generating six to 10 million new jobs within the next six years.

He wrote: "If a mature, productive, diversified and industrialized economy like the US, with almost three times our population and 50 times our GDP, has difficulties creating 2.7 million new jobs in three and a half years, we have to doubt if a ramshackle Third World economy like ours, can possibly create 10, even six, million more jobs in six (years)."

Abaya's opinion is partly answered by the way the government defines a "new" job.

Definition

Every quarter, the National Statistics Office (NSO) sends out interviewers to determine the number of employed and unemployed persons in the labor force.

"Labor force" is defined in the NSO Manual Labor Force Survey as "the household population 15 years old and over, who contribute to the production of goods and services in the country [employed] or did not work but has exerted pressure in the labor market [unemployed] during the reference week."

A question the NSO interviewers ask the respondent is how many hours he or she worked during the previous week.

If the respondent answers one hour or more, the respondent is classified as employed.

This may not be acceptable to Abaya, but this is the definition our government uses.

New jobs created

With this definition, the following table is presented:

Year	Jobs created (000)	Note/also from Philippine Daily Inquirer
1998	795	Not available
1999	1,111	1,284
2000	790	913
2001	1,614	1,866
2002	998	1,156
2003	673	826

From 2000 to 2003, the Arroyo administration succeeded in creating an average of 1.09 million jobs a year.

Some in government might have concluded that, with this trend, creating 1 million jobs a year for the next six years is easily achievable.

However, the 1.7 million jobs recorded in 2001 are largely because there was a job decrease of 790,000 in the previous year.

The only other time when there was an increase by more than 1 million jobs was in 1999.

This happened also after a very low turnout of an additional 190,000 jobs during the prior year.

Excluding the unusual 2001 job increase, the average number of new jobs for the remainder of the Arroyo administration was 730,000.

Assuming no significant changes, a forecast of 730,000 jobs for the next six years is more realistic.

That is also close to the average of 838,000 new jobs recorded from 1998 to 1999.

We, therefore, have to make significant changes to achieve the target of 1 million new jobs a year.

Even more so, if we are to achieve the higher target of 10 million jobs for the next six years, or 1.7 million jobs a year.

Labor force increase

From the same table above, we note an unusual finding.

From an age population increase by 2.4 percent a year, the new entrants and re-entrants into the labor force decreased from 1.9 million in 2001 to 1.1 million in 2002 to 0.6 million in 2003.

This of course, makes the unemployment rate look better.

To estimate annual labor force increase for the next six years, one method is to assume that the 2003 labor force will increase by the 2.4 percent population rate increase. This would mean an additional 800,000 job entrants (not counting re-entrants) a year.

With this estimate, we have no choice but to aim for at least a million new jobs a year just to provide jobs to the new job entrants.

Creating jobs

In creating jobs, money is necessary.

In industry, the average cost to create a job is over P1 million. In agriculture, it is less than P100,000.

With limited money in the economy, it is but fitting to focus on agriculture to maximize job creation.

One agriculture job creation record under the Arroyo administration is 700,000 new jobs in 2001 (the presidential adviser for 1 million jobs was appointed during the last quarter of that year), 200,000 jobs in 2002, and 300,000 jobs in 2003.

It is believed that the 700,000 jobs created in 2001 could not have been achieved if 400,000 jobs were not lost during the previous year.

What the 2001 job generation accomplished was to put the 2001 job level at a net increase of only 300,000 jobs over 1999.

It is, therefore, most realistic to believe that, again unless significant changes are made, agriculture jobs will increase by only 300,000 to 200,000 a year.

Role of banks

The low number of new agriculture jobs is not surprising.

Since it takes money to create jobs, we note that the agricultural loans granted as a percentage of total loans systematically decreased from 7 percent in 1998 to 1.3 percent in 1991 and 0.7 percent in 2000.

COMMENTARY

It is recommended that the highest government officials meet the leaders of the banking sector to formulate ways to reverse this trend.

The government does not have the money to create the jobs.

Besides, when it attempts to create jobs, these jobs often do not have business feasibility and soon collapse, resulting to an absolute waste of taxpayers' money.

It is the banking sector that has the source for job creation and should play its role in generating long-term jobs.

For the sake of national interest, the banks should look differently at agriculture lending.

This will be a best solution in addressing Mrs. Abaya's concern, and a primary tool in helping achieve at least the one million new jobs a year that our people so sorely need.

The author is chair of Agrimatch, a private sector initiative, former undersecretary of agriculture and trade and industry, and former chief and cabinet secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects. For inquiries or suggestions, e-mail agrimatch@yahoo.com or telefax 02-4533620.

Anti-aging for Asian skin /C5

DISPLAY by Morning Sun Wines

Fashion's free reign

By September Plaiton

TO MAKE fashion more accessible to more people, the Power Plant Mall in Rockwell recently opened Independent Lifestyles. Located at the 2/L Power Plant Mall's Lifestyle Wing, the section is made up of "fashion stores that are revolutionary to the mall system," says Arnie Flores, Power Plant Mall general manager. "They are upcoming businesses that carry unique items and have been getting news from clients."

Instead of the typical ribbon-cutting ceremony, the new section was launched with the release of butterflies, symbolically heralding the start of the greater cleaning power that the Power Plant Mall is offering consumers. Key pieces and items from the Independent Lifestyles shops were featured in a fashion show hosted by Bobby Carmona and Metro's Nemina Uera Gonzales.

Guests from the fashion and publishing industries dazzled over the wares afterward, which were laid out in such a way that shoppers wouldn't feel constricted as they browsed from store to store. Instead of the usual enclosed boutiques, the area has an "open market" feel to it that allows one to see as many items as possible, without having to walk much.

Independent Lifestyles carries 15 store names, some of them new in the mall scene. Wallah, a favorite among fashion insiders, is known for its top-of-the-line Asian fashion. Rhea, another favorite, is noted for its made-to-order formal clothes, bags, jewelry and shoes. For shoppers who are looking for 100-percent Filipino-made accessories, Mybarlo carries silver jewelry that is crafted by highly trained Filipino silversmiths and fashioned from indigenous Philippine materials. Wa Gonchee Accessories, having its roots in local bazaars, offers quality leather items, such as custom-made bags and briefcases.

For cosmopolitan shoppers, Mimi is the one-stop shop for urban makeup brands that are made for Asian women. Nothing But Water, a popular beachwear shop, has a new line called Sea Fetish that is fun, high fashion and designed with the Filipina figure in mind. Hot Pink, a local lingerie store, boasts of locally manufactured products that can compete with foreign brands both in design and quality and not to forget the menfolk, there's Mosaic Men, a brand of the local retail shop Mosaic that carries stylish and modern wardrobe basics made for him.

Other Independent Lifestyles shops are the resale label fashion house Chowdare, French fashion shop Marion Godart, London-based young fashion store Topshop, Singapore's footwear fashion store Stylo & Co., the locally designed Soles Shoes, imported shoe shop Mrs Cassis, and an alternative fashion store for men and women, Details & Porcupine.

With such choice shops now open to the public, every wannabe fashionista's dream of dressing well and looking good is not so impossible anymore.

MICO is noted for its made-to-order formal clothes, bags, jewelry and shoes.

MPS FOR THE PICKING. It was his friends who greeted the returnee Gian Romano to join the club. Here, he is cheered on by his models after he is declared winner on finals night.

DESIGNER Julie Lluisma describes Romano as one of his best students.

Fashion star on the rise

Text by Charlie V. Morel
Photos by Dido Nicdao

He is only 22, he has just hosted five other finalists in the Sub Mega Young Designers Competition (YDC), and he is on his way to "million" his price in London next month.

But here's Gian Romano complaining he's broke. "And I haven't slept in days!" he says, laughing.

It's been two days since he bagged his first fashion prize, and Romano admits he is still reeling from the whirl of activities that led to the finals night on Thursday.

The fact that he actually won has yet to sink in, and now he's again rushing to pack his bags for the London trip, where he will take up a course at the prestigious Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design. The prize was awarded by the British Council, which co-presented the competition with Mega magazine.

Clever reworking

Romano won for his clever reworking of old men's trousers in a one-piece collection that interpreted the costume "Fashion Is Fashioned." The theme was inspired by the current rage for vintage (read: ukay-ukay) fashion.

The youngest in this year's batch of finalists, Romano plied talents with flowers from Bacolor, Collection Castles of Manila, Divas Castle Solutions of Las Piñas, Fashionard Abaniel from Iloilo and Jeffrey Bugador of Novaliches.

"I think Gian won because his collection was cohesive," says designer Julie Lluisma. Romano is one of Lluisma's students in the pattern-cutting class he teaches in his atelier.

"You can distinctly see how he explored the theme," explains Lluisma. "He transformed old pants into new pieces... The sleeves looked like they just took an old piece and mixed it up with new fabrics."

"His fabrication was okay," agrees Randy Ortiz, who was one of the judges. "His orientation was charismatic and his tailoring very strong."

Romano started designing for scout-queen Hilkhanar in 2002 while he was still studying hotel and restaurant management at De La Salle-Dasmariñas. He credits Ignacio Loyola as his mentor.

Romano lives with relatives a block away from the Inquirer office in Makati, but this young man grew up in Bigaa City. He says he wanted to pursue design in college, but was dissuaded by his parents, who said it wasn't practical.

After graduating, however, Romano's interest in fashion persisted. He began styling for fashion shows and editorials. The experience evidently worked to great advantage during the YDC finals night.

Collaborating with show director Bobby Carreon, all his six models took the runway at the same time in anguished attire, hunched with sulking, as though they were grieving widows garbed in their late husbands' clothing. The audience was pleased.

Jigsaw patchwork

Romano's closest rival, according to the senior designers, was the 30-year-old Iloilo, who reinvented the Filipino barong by cutting the just fabric into jigsaw puzzle pieces before reserving them into contemporary women's shirts. Iloilo repeated the jigsaw patchwork theme in his shirts and pants. He studied hotels at the Jacob complex in Iloilo.

"I had a hard time choosing between Gian and Avner," admits Old Morales, who was also a judge. Morales, president of the Fashion Designers Association of the Philippines, lauds the painstaking detail that went into each of Iloilo's pieces. "But Gian was better in conceptualizing and interpreting the theme."

Romano, too, admits he felt more threatened by Iloilo's work. Still, his edge was the versatility of his clothes, says Morales. "Each of G. ian's pieces has wearth. With Avner's, if you remove one, you won't realize it."

While he says the Divas designer's collection was "relaxedet and sleet," Lluisma thinks the detailing was too cluttered. "It was too mixed up. "Pag-sawsy-sawsy 'yung details... But take the pieces [separately] and they're good."

"Three young designers are different and more experimental, notes Morales. The other finalists were found wanting in cohesion, he adds.

Each of this year's finalists was assigned a mentor. It was Hector Ramos Dias who helped fine-tune Romano's collection. The two are classmates in Lluisma's class.

A YDC finalist in 1997, Ramos Dias says she has confidence in Romano's talent. "When I saw it, it was already fusing fun and consistent. Everything was his idea."

Romano, for his part, says it was Ramos Dias who suggested added detail, features to draw on.

Good indication

According to Ortiz, president of the Fashion and Design Council of the Philippines, the YDC was a good indicator of what to expect at the upcoming Philippine Fashion and Design Competition (PFDC) in October.

The PFDC will pick the country's five entries to the Gaoxiao dei Jeans Creation de Mode, the Paris competition to be held in Cheongju.

"I hope I don't get jitsted," Romano quips when reminded that it's not always the contest winners who make it big in the business. (Past YDC finalists include Ramos Dias, Bajo [actor] Michi Calica and Oj Isidro.)

Cometa agrees, from the organizer, says Ortiz, but "it's out of creativity. You have to work hard, be passionate, dedicated and focused. You have to have the heart for it."

"I think Gian is serious with his work. And he has the attitude," Ramos Dias agrees.

Given the age-old problem besetting the local fashion industry, Ortiz says his research effort's include creating a favorable climate that would urge young designers to forge on.

As for Romano, he's in the fashion business for the long haul. "I could make a living by getting a job in a hotel or a cruise ship," he says. "But this is my passion. This is what I want to do."

Romano remains a struggling artist by any standard, relying on the help of sewers from his former life at a Bikolnon designer. But he likes to dream big, expressing his hopes to score an apprenticeship abroad and maybe establish himself there.

But for now, he's just waiting for his mom to send him his plane ticket so he can go home to Bigaa.

E-mail the author at morel@inquirer.com.ph

ADMIRED'S "eye for fashion is really something," says designer Old Morales.

ROMANO says the senior designers singled out this piece as the strongest in his collection. The darts on the vest are actually the front pleats of an old pair of trousers. The sleeves are reworked pants that originally had a 40-inch waistline.

DOWN! Camille Dolorico marvels mask-and-chiffon.

AZTEC Barbie references the Filipina heritage.

FERDINAND Abaniel models origami and '80s bridesmaid dresses.

CATHERINE Candino's nod to the "Empress of Japan and London."

JEFFREY Bugador's playful neon-theatre reworking of the denim.

STYLE in the South/C7

LIFESTYLE

Scarf your way to all-time glam

APPLES' PICKINGS

Applez Aberin-Sadhwani

It's best to invest in a soft, drapeable and thin piece of cloth made of silk, cashmere, crepe de chine, chiffon or charmeuse

THE SCARF is perhaps one of the most versatile fashion accessories ever. It can update one's look instantly and make an old, drab outfit look colorfully attractive.

Normally used as additional protection against the elements, especially in western or European countries where there are four seasons, this accessory is now popularly worn in versatile and attractive ways.

Natives are commonly seen as neck and head wraps or bandanas, but you can get more creative by knotting them into different styles of tops, sashes, dresses and the like. But before you knot yourself into a frenzy, you must first find out what kinds of scarves are best for whatever

SCARF C4

Scarf your way to all-time glam

From page C3

purpose you have in mind.

Generally, it's best to invest in a soft, shapeable and thin scarf made of silk, cashmere, crepe de chine, chiffon or charmeuse.

Hold the scarf by the center and see how it falls. It should drape softly and fluidly. Otherwise, you'll have a hard time wearing it as a top, dress and sarong.

You must also make sure that the scarf has flattering (and at both ends). You have to avoid bulk, so scarf fabrics are not advisable. And when choosing a design, make sure that both sides are equally beautiful because they will both be visible when tied.

Scarves also come in different shapes and sizes to suit every need. Normally, the standard shape is a square and the measurements are as follows: 18-24 inches for neck wraps; 27-36 inch es for waist and head wraps; 36-45 inches for shoulder wraps; a skirt or mini dress, 54-60 inches for shawls, sarongs, longer skirts and dresses. There are also oblong-shaped scarves that can be used as snoods and mantillas.

Choose the shape and size of your scarf according to how you intend to use it. It is also advisable to take your size into consideration. If you are petite, you should shy away from larger scarves that will overwhelm your diminutive figure. Conversely, if you are on the heavier side, stay away from tiny scarves that will only make you look bigger.

Colors and prints also play a major role in achieving scarf flattery. Choose hues that go with your skin tone. Warm-colored skin undertones, browns, cream and beige will complement those with yellow undertones, while icy hues like white, lavender and snow white will look best on those with blue undertones.

Meanwhile, large prints will dwarf those who are petite, and make those who are on the heavy side look even heavier. Also, keep in mind that the smaller the scarf, the smaller the pattern should be. Proportion is a very important factor to consider. So, be careful when picking your prints.

A scarf is versatile print, available and can be worn a hundred different ways. But just like anything else, it takes a lot of practice and experimentation. You may have a hard time at first, but soon enough, you'll be quite an expert.

To help illustrate how scarves can be worn in multiple ways, I asked some of Manila's best-dressed women-to-create different looks with the use of their own scarves. Let these stylish mavens inspire you to create your own, unique look.

Source: "In Style: Answers of Style" by the editors of In Style

E-mail the author at up-nadrian@hotmail.com

Raya Manuel, model

Raya wore her red-colored scarf as an obi by wrapping it around her waist and tying it in a knot. She then accessorized it with several chain belts to add flair.

"I own a lot of scarves because I use them backstage during shows. And whenever I go out and I have nothing to wear, I simply take one of my scarves and turn it into a top," she says.

Nicolette Bell, model

With the use of a crystal choker, Nicolette turned an ordinary scarf into a stunning top. Get this look by folding the scarf into a triangle and attaching one end to the neckpiece (simply knot it). Wear the necklace as you normally would. Then, tie the remaining loose ends on your back to create a halter top.

Those who are a bit more daring can also achieve Nicolette's plunging, backless look. Just throw a long scarf around your neck and let it fall in your front. Spread out the scarf so that it envelops and secures with a belt.

Izza Gonzales-Aguas, stylist

Intentionally turning classic scarves into different tops and styles often irritating for fashion shows, for her own personal use, she draped her vibrantly colored flowers scarf into a gorgeous asymmetric top that can be worn for any occasion.

"During the day, wear it with white cuper pants and ballerina flats for a classy but casual look. For more formal affairs, top it off with an elegant bag strap," Izza advises.

To achieve this look, simply wrap the scarf around your torso and tie two ends on one shoulder. Then, tie the other two ends around your waist.

Jenni Eppersen, stylist

Jenni chose the Hermes Teddy to prove that scarves are versatile and modern accessories. This latest, embroidered style doubles as a headband and is available in classic Hermes inspirations (applied) and Paddy Picasso prints.

"The scarf is always associated with the neck or worn as a headband but it can be used in various ways," says Jenni. She created a young and whimsical look by wearing her Teddy as a sweater, which she cleverly accessorized with a rhinestone brooch.

LIFESTYLE Beauty

Anti-aging for Asian skin

CLINIQUE Repairwear day SPF 15 lotion

ESTÉE Lauder Resilience Lift Overnight

I SAW a picture of myself and knew I had aged. Upon scrutiny I realized what it was—a slight sagging of the jaw line. Asians apparently don't wrinkle, we sag. My reaction was for a good anti-aging-firming cream that would not irritate my acne-prone skin either. My current favorites:

Guinevere Skin Lift ($2,500/session)—this machine exercises your face to shorten the muscles and lift them. Luckily I only needed four sessions (two per week) to regain my old firmness. It actually works on the skin's foundation, trapped whereas creams just deal with the skin.

The technician did it on half my face first and I saw the difference right away. This is especially beneficial on women who have obvious sagging and lines on the face.

The program is discounted at P25,000 for 15 sessions at Belmond. Bonus: like a body workout, the skin needs regular exercise so you have to drop by the gym once in a while.

Say cheeeeeese/arrrrrrrr: silly/arrrr poses directed moment you see those above while normal to dry once should start there with moisturizer. **Murad's Day Solution** gave me the most instantaneous results (poros after application, my skin texture became finer).

Murad's Essential-C Daily renewal complex (P3,000)—aside from the firming, it gives a glow to the even-toned skin. It boasts sun protection, but need sit duration.

Lifetime Skin Firming Treatment Serum (P3,000 at Rustik Express)—Contains powerful firming agents such as Alpha Lipoic, BHAE and Coenzyme Q10. Also has anti-oxidants.

Top or right: Mia Fermata Botx G cream gives you skin that springs back when you pinch it. The finish is matte. The face and neck look and feel like they are wearing a glycolic. I used the whole line and I recommend the booster and emulsion under the cream.

Carita Progressif Crème parfait (P10,000) is too rich for me. This requires no sunscreen or any other concoction but is designed for mature skin that has already sagged and with visible lines so if just tried it on my neck and hands. Wow!

Crème de La Mer (P9,000 for 2 oz jar) is also too rich for me but helps pigmentation as well. Tip: 1) Use when it is four days or longer than it says the La Mer eye balm for her whole face. It glides on and hydrates and firms up the skin without causing breakouts. The miracle treatment is three times more concentrated. No eye cream needed.

Right only: Talk about support for face and anti-aging to

MAKEOVER 911

Kitsee Salas

CARITA Progressif Crème parfait

CRÈME de La Mer eye balm

MURAD C3 Essential C Daily renewal complex

Anti-aging for Asian skin

Turn page 4/5

world.

Seven-layer Revive Extra Night Lifting night cream, Lifeline Night Restore Cream with Vitamin C, Estée Lauder Resilience Lift overnight and La Prairie night repair cream can too rich for me. So I treat them as my hands and neck, but I love that they have an aromatherapeutic scent that kinda turns me on.

After moisturiser: If you are undergoing treatment for under-eye problems like fading freckles and scars, Clinique's Repairwear is designed to go above your moisturiser. The effects were wonderful: smaller pores, yellow marks from sleep disappear faster, glowing skin and muted morning fine lines. Repairwear day contains SPF 15 and Repairwear night is what I will use regularly whenever I have to.

Eye cream: My favourites. They don't give me milia or whiteheads around the eyes, which I am also prone to. I am an eye bags girl but I do get the occasional dark circles and fine lines after the beach.

Awake Circle Solution: Contains two vials, one for the upper lid's puffiness and dark circles and the other for dark circles and fine lines. **Elan Gemma Beta G** on globe so but I can't remember, and to an excellent eye shadow primer. It gives the eye an instant lift, leaves eye bags as it contains elasticity and brightens the eye area so dark circles are diminished.

Revitalash eye cream and **VNP Uniforce Opus** lighten dark circles and gently exfoliates so lines eventually disappear. Nevertheless's is heavy. For those with very sensitive skin that react to AHAs or BHAs. Avoid any PHA (polyhydroxy acid) that is the only lightening product that does not have sensitive skin.

Revitalash Chamomile eye gel...Great for fine lines and sore eyes, lightens dark circles so can be brighter. **Chanel** eye basic dark circle corrector (₹1,650) is designed specifically for dark circles, and **L'Oreal's Hydrabrid** eye works against puffiness but not dark circles.

Sundari and Khanal are available at Kamini Kapur's. All other brands, except for Khanal, Nourrice, Lifeline Health Express night and EMV are exclusively found at Kamini Department store. Call Mehrnaz 27777X, Nourrice 2827 XXXXXX, Avon hotline 4662XXX.

E-mail the author at kimnyreader@yahoo.com

CHANEL Eye Basic dark circle corrector

DJ Roller

PHILIP Rodriguez

JUN Duarte

Southern splendor

DENG Llanos

DENG Llanos

ARCY Gayoso

Cebu's hot designers get their moment in the spotlight via Metro Magazine and the Waterfront Hotel's Metro Wear 2005 fashion show

By Gwe Padilla

FASHION went mad recently at the Waterfront Hotel in Cebu province as a three-day style bash that opened with the hotel's joint enterprise with Metro magazine rolled, well, Metro Wear 2005, which featured collections by Cebu designers.

Ditto Llanos' '60s-inspired designs were in black, white and red assemblage. The tailored suits made fresh by polka dotted shoes, belts and accessories were glamorously low-key.

The tribal-inspired Filipiniana by top designer Philip Rodriguez represented Cebu nicely. He said it was a showcase of wearable art, depicting the metropolis' youthful, bustling, active, powerful, hot, bold, radical and highly energetic lifestyle.

Other Cebu designers such as Oli Ortiz, Jun Duarte, Pamela Baquero and Amy Gayoso (the only female in the bet) also showed impressive collections.

Model's model

Model's model Jean Bragard, wearing a Jun Duarte creation, executed her usual fabulous moves on the runway, confident and sexy in a flowing silk chiffon gown in turquoise with a hint of hand-sewn sequins.

That her right strappy heel was broken and—literally—torn unnoticed. With not a tinge of discomfort on her face, she delivered a remarkable performance. Only an ex-model in the audience who had a similar broken heel episode noticed.

Promising

On the second day, Cebu's young and promising designers—Ditto Llanos, Edwin Ao, Jun Duarte, Rudie Chong, Ray Jean, Wendell Quisido and Pamela Sandejas—unveiled an exciting all-for-cool gala collection at the Pearl's White Party Fashion Show at the Pool Aquarium.

The second addition to the prestigious series of the beautiful farm of Pearl's, Amanda Gullas, featured the show featuring the country's top models and the show Pearl's mystery man, the show was a blast.

The setup earlier in the months very well, but Pearl Jones' one of Pearl's mystery men) was a vision in white trunks by Wendell Quisido. Men and women in the audience surely had their imaginations stoked pink.

DJ Roller

Tributes to Ricciardone, the Pinay and sushi

MGA Dillon and Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima

AMBASSADOR Andy de Rosario and Alex Privitt

SENATE President Franklin Drilon and Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong

IT'S cocktail time for Teresa C. Abaurrea

WOMEN OF SUBSTANCE. Inquirer chair Marie Rufino Prieto, author Beth Day Romulo and Gretchen del Rosario

I was one of those fortunate happenings where quality pointed star the left of the staple and the guests consisted of the best and brightest, pedungan.

The President's cousin advisor, Ambassador Roberto Romulo, gave a dinner in honor of US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone and his new ambassador wife, Dr. Marie Ricciardone. The ambassador had just returned to Manila to attend the President's inauguration in Lanao and Cebu.

I was told he had been temporarily detailed to the State Department to handle the opening of the US embassy in Baghdad, Iraq.

The emoticons prepared dinner was gracefully hosted by Mrs. Romulo beauty out pedungan. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, to this.

She personally set the table in the private Romulo home of Wilson Alley as the food in soft-centered Maria. Talented executive chef Cecille Soriano (she started to an Hongkong prepared a gourmet's delight.

Dinner started with the to-die-for pan-fried duck liver on mashed mushroom, crispy mango tempura and herb salad with mango-lemongrass vinegar dressing, followed by the entrees: wild mushroom soup. To end the palate was refreshing mango-chestnut. There is thick between fresh sea bass with potatoes and leeks seared with creamy truffle sauce, and roasted veal chops, served with egg stable stuffed with potatoes, fresh shallots and tomatoes with balsamic vinegar sauce.

And finally, the calorific dessert, a hot Gran Marnier soufflé with vanilla ice chocolate sauce on the side. Now you know what quality granted is all about, n'est pas?

The quality of the food was exceeded only by the quality of the guest list, which included Senate President Franklin Drilon and his wife, Finance Secretary Nilda Drilon; Foreign Secretary Delia Albert; Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima; Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo and Lovely Romulo; and Ambassador to Washington Alfred del Rosario.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcuche

Photos by Alex Van Hagen on Rinchi Mata

In a short address, Romulo said that Ambassador Ricciardone came "both just in time to support the Philippines during these very challenging times."

"As President Arroyo starts to implement her 10-point agenda, it is equally important that the nations of the world, including the United States, support her efforts. Fortunately, we know that, but more importantly you know and understand us," Romulo said. "However, I need to clear you will see plunge by in 100 percent agreement, but hopefully you will be a diplomat as described by the American pundit, James Reston: His may will yes to get to bill, but he said it to make a way that you really look forward to the journey."

Ambassador Bobby replied our Ambassador Del Rosario as "one of the most outstanding ambassadors the Philippines has ever sent to the United States ... and I am not interested in any government job, either abroad, or in Manila," he said with a laugh, as the guests applauded.

Excellent Japanese food

And an excellent light lunch at Makati Shangri-La's crop of the late Japanese restaurant Inagiku. The place was packed with Cynthia Medalla's students. It was like a meeting of the power rumordroppables, pedungan.

Singapore Airlines' Rita Ho was at a table with the airline's new general manager, super young Eugene Lee. Then were with financier Lay Juichiot owner of the LEE building, and his daughter, executive Audrey Lee, who enjoyed the popular ice igloo, sashimi and other yummies.

Businessman Jackie Ponce Enrile and his associates were at another table. Michael-to-be Buffy Fernandez was with two of her girl pals Elgilda Sachez Sicky Delgado and a blond friend jennie.

Socialites Marilou Tuason Gutierrez, Diana Bernardez Santos and Bubbu de Leon enjoyed the superb Fish Steak, which the sensei at Inagiku fix, pedungan.

Mr. Chong of Landmark fame dined with his family.

We reminisced about our trip to Florence recently with Bids Madrigal Vasquez, businessman Raul Manotoc and fashion standout Dona Ria Salcedo Nuyda Benson.

I directed on the Agedashi Tofu and Ramen salad, which was so good, I had to control myself from ordering another. Bids and Raul couldn't get enough of the Shiitake Teppanyaki. Jennie was on a diet and stuck to her Sukiyaki, "with no fats, please."

Completely delighted were the power lunch veteran was the hotel's director of communications, Joy Plummer, who told us, "But I'd always like this any day of the week."

I believe her, definitely.

And what was that high-profile businessman whose family belongs to the old rich who used decently bumped into me as I was sitting on the side and asked if he could? He refused to lying in discreetly here with a smartly dressed young lady executive. Cosette, pedungan.

HOTSHOTS OF THE HOUR. US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone, Ambassador Alfred del Rosario, host Roberto R. Romulo, Senate President Franklin Drilon and Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo

Valentine's again

Socialite Boy recently celebrated White Day a sort of Japanese Valentine's Day.

Partners expressed their romantic feelings for one another through a selection of sweet treats, especially rubber chocolates.

The first 10 couples who came clad in silk shirts and/or blouses got an extra treat. Treat is Le Bay Alabang numbering coordinator Philip Ignacio awarded their P500-worth of fantasy they gift certificates.

Founded in 1981, Tatjaki Boy is the first casual Japanese dining restaurant in the Philippines. It has branches in Madrigal Square Greenhills, Tomas Morato, Glorietta 3 Ayala Center, Bonifacio High Mall and SM City Baguio. Call 911-0226 and 911-0227.

IN THE WINNING CIRCLE. Optometrist and Kathleen Evangelista with Philip Ignacio, Tatjaki Boy Alabang marketing coordinator, and Ryan Morales, store marketing assistant

HOME WINNERS. Jayvee and Cheyenne de la Fuente, gift certificate winners

VERA, Jack and Marlene Yuhot with Ryan Morales

LOVELY Romulo stole at Presidential Pretoria: Ambassador Gaighagay Lacambra; lawyer Ricardo Romulo; host Dilka Montinola Romulo and Dr. Maria Ricciardone

Lawyers strike back

SEEING GREEN

Doris Gershoff Nayole

A LEGAL Strike Force has joined environmentalists in going after environmental law violators. The targets of the first strike last April were commercial fishing boat owners, many of them known to be "the biggest fish in illegal fishing" in the Visayan Sea.

Before the strike, the fishing boat owners were deemed "untouchables" even as they trespassed the 15-km zone from the coastline to municipal waters reserved for small fishermen.

The operation took place in Barangay Island off Cebu in April after months of planning and intensive coordination by the Inaugural Unit of the Philippine National Environmental Action Team (INFRAGET) under lawyer Antonio Oposa. With the lawyers were enforcement operatives from the National Bureau of Investigation, Philippine Navy Marine Police, Coast Guard, as well as representatives of the Barangay local government, teachers, law and high school students, fishermen and others.

Investigation showed big commercial fishing boats had been intruding into municipal waters for years because the owners were not arrested. The excuse was, anyway, the "offended parties" were only fish and the sea, some of which had legal ownership.

Upon ordered the help of Barangay mayor personnel and University of the Philippines law interns in force were old records and gather pending several warrants for violators. The Strike Force was then formed.

A report on the Barangay operation said: "The Legal Strike Force clambered aboard a Navy gun boat ... at the crack of dawn". as "the entire waters of Barangay Island [seemed] to speckle with [municipal] boats. There was enough drama and suspense in search a John Grisham novel or a Steven Seagal film.

In 128 minutes, "in an operation marked by surgical precision," the report said, "the Legal Strike Force rounded up and hauled [off] in jail not one but three of the biggest fishing mag-nates in Negros."

The Strike Force also warned Barangay based fishing boat owners "to comply with the spirit of the laws on fisheries conservation lest they suffer the same fate as their Negros counterparts."

Local governments were advised "to set up marine sanctuaries as required by law, which stipulated that 15 percent of municipal waters be reserved for marine sanctuaries.

Island raid

Earlier, the BFAR-NIAE and enforcement operatives raided a Bo Bang island and discovered not ten (1,000 kg) of blasting powder (equivalent to 6,000 sticks of dynamite) in the same the deadly blast in fish, holocaust, in 2002. The culprits were arrested and are now in jail.

The incident prompted the lawyers' group to seek the cancellation of licenses to purchase explosives if the required procedures for the disposal of explosives were not met.

With the lawyers, enforcement and other environmentalists working together, the Strike Force is sending out the message that those who abuse our seas must now contend with a powerful force that does not care who they are or where they are.

Writing contest

Many seamen with environmental themes are a good way to instill environmental awareness in the young, especially when the focus is on the writer's personal commitment to the environment.

One such contest that high-school students can look forward to is the 2004 World Environment Day Essay Writing Contest to mark Environment Month, which started June 5, World Environment Day.

The contest, now on its third year, is being conducted by the United Nations Information Center (UNIC) in partnership with the Hydro Electric Development Corp., Manila Electric Inc. and Manila Tramcar Systems Corp. It is open to all high-school students in the country.

Theme of the same is "The Benefits of Clean and Renewable Energy." It must be written in English, typewritten or computer printed on short bond paper (8 ½ x 11), in 12-point Times New Roman or Arial font, and 1,000-1,500 words long.

Deadline for entries is Sept. 3, meaning of prizes will be five. 3 or a special reception to mark Philippine Environment Month.

For more information, contact Sylvia G. Inciong, national information officer, at sinciong@unicmanila.org or info-center@unicmanila.org.

Nature trip

After a year's hill, Cathay Pacific Airways resumed its seat-nesting program called International Wilderness Experience. The program, now in its seventh year, sends 60 young students from Asia and the Pacific, aged 15-18, to the nature preserve in Timbavati, South Africa, to learn about nature conservation and each other's cultures.

The trip is the students' prize for winning in an environmental essay writing contest conducted by Cathay Pacific winners are Janine Michelle Manuel of UP Diliman, Natasha Gonzalez of International School and Gayle Quinto, UP Visayas (Cebu). They leave for South Africa tomorrow, July 17.

E-mail the author or dotcmag-ds@yahoo.com